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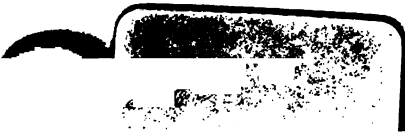
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DIGBY GRAND.

VOL. I.



DIGBY GRAND:

An Autobiography.

BY

G. J. WHYTE MELVILLE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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DIGBY GRAND:

In Autobiography.

CHAPTER I.

‘THE MORNING OF LIFE.’

‘GRAND and Buffler to stay!’ says the ‘prepostor’ of the Lower Remove-Remove, as he darts into our hall of learning on his humane errand. Right well do Grand and Buffler know what that simple sentence indicates; and ere the messenger of Fate, in the shape of a short and dirty lower boy collegger, or ‘tug’ has departed, they evince by a simultaneous hitching of the waistband, and wistful expression of countenance, their very disagreeable anticipation of the discipline to follow. Gravely the construing proceeds, as it has proceeded from time immemorial within those classic walls, and whatever ‘Henry’s holy shade’ might think of it, I can imagine the pagan ghost of heathen Horace would be somewhat aghast, could his repose in the realms of Pluto be disturbed by the blundering school-boy’s version of his polished stave.

Let us hear how Bullock-major renders the dreaded Ode. *Justum et tenacem propositi virum*, begins the much-enduring master, giving to the thrilling stanza that harmonious roll, which shows that much and often as his favourite has been murdered to his unwilling ear, he still clings to him with all a scholar's devotion—' *Justum*' &c.—' Bullock-major, go on!' Up starts the electrified disciple with all the readiness of a professor, but deep are the misgivings at his heart, and clouded the impression on his brain; for Bullock-major, though as stalwart 'a stroke' as ever feathered an oar round Lower Hope, and as straight a bowler as ever skimmed the emerald sward of the lower shooting-fields, is yet modestly aware of his own deficiencies, and has a wholesome horror of being, like Grand and Buffler, 'in the bill.' At it he goes, however, with changeless intonation and nasal twang—' *Virum*, the man'—pause—' *justum*, just'—pause—' *et tenacem*, and tenacious'—(Bravo, Bull! says the next boy on the form, a scapegrace of some eleven summers)—' *propositi*'—a solemn pause,—dark grows the master's brow—go on, sir, *propositi*—Bullock grows desperate: ' *propositi*—of his proposition.' Hear him, melodious minstrel of Rome's palmiest days!—' Sit down, sir!—put him in the bill,—next boy go on.' And the unfortunate Bullock-major embarks in the same boat with Buffler and myself.

Ah! those were glorious days, notwithstanding the

'bill,' and all its horrors ; some of the happiest hours that I, Digby Grand, have spent in my chequered career, were passed at dear old Eton ; with just enough of school and school discipline to make the relaxation of play delightful, with every kind of amusement the heart of boy could desire—with boating, cricket, foot-ball, hocky, paper-chases, and leaping parties, or as we call them, 'levies'—and above all, with that abundance of congenial society, and those cordial friendships, so delightful to youth. No wonder that the old Etonian's heart still warms, when he catches sight of the walls of 'College'—no wonder that he remembers, with a vividness after years can never obliterate, each characteristic of the long past scene. The dreaded Hawtrey, 'my tutor,' by turns loathed and beloved ; 'my dame,' an object now of ridicule, now of affection ; Windsor Bridge, Mother Tolliday, the wary and well-informed Spankie himself ; the 'ticks up-town,' the 'sock-shop,' the triumphs on the water, won with sculls and oar—the glories of the sward, when an Eton eleven sacked the second-best team of the Marylebone Club—all and each of these images are clung to and remembered in many a varied scene and distant land ; ay, such early impressions as these will return to the imagination of the wanderer, even when the dearest and holiest ties of home are for a time forgotten. But let me also look back through the long vista of years gone by—let me live once more in memory the joyous days of

spring, when the heart was merry and the step was light, when the breeze of morning kissed an open brow, as yet unseamed by care, and lifted clustering locks, unthinned, unbleached by time—when tomorrow was as though it would never be, and today was all in all—without a care, without a fear, save of the consequences of some youthful scrape, ending in the fatal catastrophe of corporal punishment.

I was brought up a 'dandy'—that was the word in my younger days. From the time I left the nursery, the first lesson inculcated on my youthful mind, was, 'Digby, hold up your head, and look like a gentleman.' 'Mister Digby, don't dirty your boots, like the poor people's children.' I lost my mother when still a baby; so my ideas of her are chiefly drawn from her portrait in the dining-room—a fair and beautiful woman, with large melancholy eyes and nut-brown hair: I presume it was from her that I inherited those glossy locks, on the adornment of which I have spent so much time and trouble, that would have been far better bestowed on the cultivation of the inner portion of my skull. My father, Sir Peregrine Grand, of Haverley Hall, was what is emphatically called, a gentleman 'of the old school;' that is to say, his weaknesses were those of drinking a great deal of port at a sitting, swearing considerably even in ladies' society, and taking an inordinate quantity of snuff; but then he was adorned with all the shining virtues that so distinguished this same 'old school:' he

eschewed cigar-smoking as a vice filthy in the extreme. His morals were as loose as those of his neighbours, but his small-clothes were a great deal tighter. He had his hair dressed by his valet regularly every morning—and then *he knew his position* so well, and he took care every one else should know it too. Nevertheless, though an ill-judging, he was an indulgent father to me; and I do believe his dearest wishes were centred in myself, his only child. Not that he thought much of my morals or my intellect, but he took care that I should be a good horseman and an unerring shot; and as some fathers would wish their children to be distinguished in the different walks of public life—as warriors, authors, orators, or statesmen—so was it poor Sir Peregrine's dearest hope that 'Digby should be a man of fashion—by Jove! the sort of fellow, sir, that people are glad to see, and a man that knows his position, Dr. Driveller—that knows his position, sir. I recollect many years ago, when I was a young fellow, the women called me Peregrine Pickle; I could do what I liked then, anywhere, and with any of them, but I never forgot my position, sir—never forgot my position.'

'Very true, Sir Peregrine,' said the worthy doctor, who would have assented equally to the most preposterous proposition, if made by my father,—'very true; when Digby leaves Eton, he must go into the army.'

‘But not the Line, papa!’ says the precocious urchin alluded to. ‘Fortescue-major, at my tutor’s, says the Line is very low, and most Eton fellows go into the Guards. I shall go into the Guards, papa.’

‘Hold your tongue, Digby, and hand me the biscuits. Doctor, ring the bell, and we will just peep into another bottle of port.’

Such was the substance of our usual conversation after dinner when I was at home for the holidays, and such it might have remained, without ever approximating the desired end, had it not been for an accidental circumstance, which procured me a friend whose energy urged upon my father the necessity of taking some steps with regard to my entrance into life, and through whose instrumentality I obtained a commission in her Majesty’s service.

Everything at Haverley Hall was conducted upon a scale, to say the least of it, of lordly magnificence; and as, during my boyhood, I never knew a wish ungranted, or a request refused, which had for its object the further circulation of the coin of the realm, my boyish idea naturally was, that my father’s resources were inexhaustible, and that, to use a common expression, ‘money was no object.’ How could I tell that the lengthy conferences in his private room from which our old man of business, Mr. Mortmain, used to emerge with a darkened brow and a drooping chin—had for their object the furtherance of supplies, and for their argument the still-to-be-solved

problem of making two and two equal to five;—how could I tell that from sheer mismanagement and love of display, year after year a goodly rent-roll was diminishing, and a fine property alienating itself from its natural possessor? Come what might, Sir Peregrine must have three servants out of livery, to say nothing of a multitude of giants in plush and powder. Though he seldom or never got upon a horse, the stables must be filled with a variety of animals, good, bad, and indifferent. Hating standing about in the cold more than anything, he was not by any means a constant attendant at Newmarket; and when there, wished himself anywhere else in the world; but that was no reason why every list of acceptances, for every doubtful event on the Turf, should not be adorned by the name of one of his race-horses, selected from a string which he never saw, but of whose length he might judge by that of his trainer's bill. One of my first scrapes as a boy was not remembering how 'Euclid' was bred, having confounded that gallant animal with a mathematician of the same name. As for going out in a carriage with less than four horses, Sir Peregrine would rather have walked, gout and all, than compromised 'his position' by such a proceeding; and as all his ideas with regard to dinners, entertainments, housekeeping, &c., were upon the same scale, it would have required, indeed, the fortune of a millionaire to support this style of magnificence.

From my father's increasing indolence as he grew into years, the management of the shooting and the stables came into my hands, at an age when the achievements of most boys are limited to an occasional rabbit slaughtered by favouritism with the keeper's gun, or a stolen ride on the unwilling pony, that goes to the post, carries the game, and does the odd jobs ; but long ere I had mounted the tailed coat and stiff cravat of incipient manhood, I could knock over wild partridges right and left, and ride my own line to a pack of fox-hounds, as well as many who, although double my age, had perhaps less experience in these accomplishments. Before I left Eton, I used to make my own horses, as the term is ; and as my father never grudged me anything I desired, in the way of extravagance, I had but to gain over the trainer, to obtain as a gift any one of his thorough-bred horses, that in our united wisdom we should choose to condemn as too slow for racing. I always found this species of request, as involving no immediate outlay of ready money, to be granted most willingly ; and it was after a gift of this description that I sallied forth one morning in early spring for the purpose of riding a four-year-old, fresh from Newmarket, over every fence that should come in my way, and thereby perfecting him as a hunter against the ensuing season. Oh ! the delight of a glorious gallop over grass, on a fine morning, the easy swing of the free-going animal beneath you, to

which every muscle and joint of the horseman instinctively adapts itself; the fresh and exhilarating breeze, created by the rapid motion; the constant change of scene as you scour along over upland and meadow; the 'middle distance, as painters call it, wheeling into ever-varying beauty: then the reflective flattery, reciprocated by the flying pair; the 'how well I ride *you*, and how well you carry *me*;' the association of ideas, and recollections of the many good runs you have seen, and the many more you hope to see, if you are a hunting man,—as, ten to one, if you really enjoy this sort of thing, you are,—all this makes a morning gallop one of the pleasantest sensations experienced by youth and health; and it was with a full appreciation of its delights that I sent the four-year-old along on the morning in question, solitary, and, as I thought, unseen. I sped my flight like a sea-bird on the wing. Everything was most successful at first; my young horse was in the best of humours, and appeared to enjoy his lesson as much as his instructor. We bounded over the park-rails like a deer; we disposed of the Ha-ha—an ugly obstacle enough, in our stride: we went in and out of a rough, tangled, double hedge, that skirted the plantation on the hill, as cleverly as if our united ages had been double their real amount; and when, flushed with success, I turned his head for the vale, a fine grass line of extensive pastures, I felt as if nothing could stop us. But horses, like men, may

be somewhat too thin-skinned; and as I neared the highroad, I spied a strong overgrown fence, through the thorns and briers of which we should have to force our way; and thick, tangled, and dark was the forbidden leap. I went at it fast, thinking the pace might send us through like a bullet; but, rapidly as we approached, my young horse, when within a stride of the fence, came round upon his haunches with a quickness all his own, and which might have unhorsed many a tolerable equestrian. One more chance I gave him, and then proceeded to coercive measures. The blood of his ancestors was roused, and the battle began in right earnest—the rider applying whip and spurs with sustained vigour—the animal backing, rearing, and plunging, in a manner that threatened soon to put a period to the contest in the downfall of one or both. At last I forced him into the fence; and, as he fell upon his head into the road, and recovered himself without unhorsing me, I found myself face to face with an elderly man in undress uniform, whom I immediately recognised as General Sir Benjamin Burgonet, commanding the district, accompanied by a young aide-de-camp, likewise in the livery of her Majesty.

‘Well saved, my lad, and devilish well ridden, too,’ said the jolly General, a large, heavy man, with a red face and double chin, perfectly resplendent with good living and good humour. ‘Got a good horse there for a light weight; and I’ll be bound to say,

you make him go. I've been watching you,' added he, as if that fact alone made me worthy of knight-hood on the spot. I took off my hat with my best Eton air, and introduced myself to the General as young Grand; adding, that I had the honour of meeting him at a review last year, and concluding by a cordial invitation to breakfast, at which meal I was sure Sir Peregrine would be delighted to see him. It turned out that the General was returning from some duty of inspection, and being an old friend of my father, was actually on his way to pay him a visit; nor, although he had breakfasted once, was the jolly commandant loth to indulge in a second morning meal.

As we rode into the grounds, I communicated to my companion the desire I had long entertained of entering her Majesty's service; and ere we reached the Hall, the old officer, who had taken a great fancy to me in consequence of the exploit he had so unexpectedly witnessed, made me a faithful promise that he would use all his influence with my father to induce him to consent to my leaving Eton immediately and entering the army, and that his own interest, which was great at the Horse Guards, should be strenuously exerted to procure me a commission.

His visit produced the wished-for effect, and instead of returning to Eton, I remained at home, nothing loth, as may be supposed. It was barely

a month after the General's visit that his promises were redeemed, and his exertions on my behalf crowned with success. I shall not easily forget the day; it was one of our large dinner-parties, when the host of country neighbours came flocking to Haverley, like eagles to the slaughter. My father was very great during these solemnities, and royalty itself could not be more magnificently condescending than was Sir Peregrine to his humbler guests. These dinners, like the tides, and other important evolutions of Nature, depended chiefly on the moon, as our roads, like all county highways and by-ways, were most execrable, and the different tea-boys and helpers, who officiated as body-coachmen on these occasions, were apt to diverge into fancy driving after their liberal potations of Haverley ale, heaven knows how many 'strike to the bushel,' to use a professional term for extreme potency. Then in order that the 'convives' might get home before 'morning should appear,' dinner was ordered at six precisely, at which hour the good folks would punctually assemble to go through agonies of shyness by daylight in the drawing-room. On the day in question, my father appeared earlier than usual in that apartment, and I saw by the care with which he was dressed, and his determination to be ready to receive his company—for the earliest guests had not yet arrived—that the character of courteous host was to be acted to perfection. He was still a fine-looking

man, though bent and shrunk, and must have been very handsome in his youth. His thin white hair was powdered, and his deep white neck-cloth folded with a precision it had cost his valet twenty years to acquire. His black pantaloons fitted tightly as a glove on those well-turned limbs, which had not yet lost their grace and symmetry. He was still vain of his foot, and huge bunches of black ribbon, tying the low-cut shoe, made its proportions appear even tinier than those which nature had accorded. A voluminous white waistcoat covering a portly figure—for still the waist increases as the shoulders fall—and an enormous frill, completed my father's 'get up.' And as he stepped forward from the hearth-rug, to welcome Mrs. Pottingden, the doctor's lady, with the air of a sovereign receiving a princess, he looked what he really was—a gentleman of the old school.

Mrs. Pottingden wore a turban, and was mightily afraid of my father. She rejoiced in six daughters, who went out two by two; and these were the two gawky ones.

My father says he is 'glad to see Mrs. Pottingden looking so well, and her charming girls;' and being slightly deaf, does not hear the good lady's reply, that 'the weather is beautiful, and 'Averley,' as she calls it, 'looking charmingly as she came up the approach;' for the sound of wheels going round to the stables is again heard, and our most pompous of butlers announces, 'Major and Mrs. Ramrod! and

Miss Arabella Ramrod !' and the same salutations are again exchanged, with this difference, that the new arrivals vote the weather cold and disagreeable, and ask after Sir Peregrine's gout. The latter inquiry is high treason, only Mrs. R. had forgotten it was so ; but my father is courtesy and blandness itself, for the sound of wheels is continually heard from every description of vehicle,—landau, chariot, brougham, dog-cart, and nondescript conveyance with a pair of shafts and a head ; and Mr. Soames, the butler, is breathless with the numerous announcements he is compelled to make. The Hickses, and the Johnstons, and the Longs, and old Lady Daubeney, and Admiral Portfire, and Squire Harpole of 'the Hills,' and fat Mr. Sheepskin, the lawyer, and little Mr. Stubbles, the curate—in they pour, ready and willing to pay their court to Sir Peregrine, and make play at the good things with which his table is so well provided. Heaven defend me from marshalling such a party in to dinner ; bad enough is it when the order of precedence is duly emblazoned on the veracious page of Burke or Debrett, but who shall endeavour to cope with the difficulty of giving satisfaction, when Mrs. Ramrod's indignation is roused at the affront put upon her in following Mrs. Hicks in to dinner, when everybody knows that Mrs. Hicks's uncle is only a barrister ; whereas her (Mrs. Ramrod's) grandfather was a Master in Chancery ? (poor Ramrod ! you will have it all to-night ere sleep visits your pillow) ; then,

again, Admiral Portfire ought to have taken Mrs. Long, who is a baronet's daughter, instead of making a rush for Mrs. Johnston, whose only qualifications are youth, beauty, and good humour, as that ancient mariner well knew when he secured her companionship at the dinner-table. In short, there was no end to the outrages on all the decencies of precedence; and as I knew my father piqued himself much on his management of proprieties on such occasions, and his knowledge of every one's 'position,' I anticipated with dread the irritable discussion that would arise on the morrow, when we talked over the events of the preceding evening.

But they settle down for the present over soup and sherry; and through the Babel-like confusion that prevails, I catch my father's courteous tones, as he bows his shining head now to deaf old Lady Daubeney, now to voluble Mrs. Long, while he slices the turbot, and dispenses the precious pearls of his condescension in due share to every guest. He is telling a story of the Prince of Wales and Carlton House to Lady Daubeney; and she thinks, good soul, that he is discoursing of an eminent firm in the city, which has lately failed, and sits—listening it can hardly be called in one so devoid of hearing—with an expression of interest and commiseration upon her countenance which is perfectly irresistible.

Sir Peregrine, though pompous, is seldom at fault, and he cleverly diverts his conversation to his fair

neighbour on the other hand, leaving the old lady perfectly satisfied with the share she has borne in the dialogue. And now little Mr. Stubbles, commiserating her isolated position, and emboldened by sherry, hazards a remark across the table, to the effect that 'the weather to-day was remarkably cloudy for the time of year.' The attention of the company is forcibly arrested by her ladyship's loud and irritable interrogative, and poor Mr. Stubbles, in rising confusion, repeats his unfortunate discovery. Again the old lady 'begs his pardon, she did not quite catch what he said,' and the victim, ready to sink with shyness, a third time publishes his meteorological observation. He has at length succeeded in exciting her curiosity, and, leaning back, she desires one of the stately footmen standing behind her chair to fetch her ear-trumpet out of the drawing-room. The instrument arrives, and Stubbles is again placed on the rack. I never saw a man blush so blue. The old lady adjusts her acoustic auxiliary with the nicest care, and repeats her inquiry—and when Stubbles, wishing that the earth would yawn and swallow him, has stated, for the fourth time, his observation about the clouds, my well-bred father himself cannot resist a laugh at the 'humph' of disgust and disappointment with which the old lady receives the washy substitute for what she hoped would prove a 'real bran-new bit of news.' That dinner, which my young impatience thought interminable, at length came to a close; and

as I was ruminating, half asleep, over my claret, and feigning an interest in the lively poor-law discussion carried on across me, by my neighbours on either side, Major Ramrod and old Hicks, the door opened, and Soames, walking gravely round the table, presented me with an important-looking missive, adorned with a huge official seal; above the address I read, with an indescribable thrill of excitement, the talismanic words 'On Her Majesty's Service.' The whole thing flashed upon me in an instant, and long ere I had deciphered the formal announcement from the adjutant of the 101st Regiment of Foot, informing me that 'the Queen had been graciously pleased to appoint me to an ensigncy in that distinguished corps,' and that he, the adjutant, 'had the honour to remain my obedient humble servant,' I was aware that the transformation had taken place, and the bumper of '19, filled by a mere schoolboy, would be emptied by an officer in Her Majesty's Service. I passed the letter down to my father with an air of military carelessness, and strove to preserve a becoming bearing of unmoved stoicism, during the congratulations that followed from all present. They drank my health, and success to me in my profession; and I went to bed that night feeling more thoroughly 'the soldier,' than any veteran that ever obtained his long-expected medal as a receipt in full for the wounds and dangers of a hundred fights.

A gallant and distinguished regiment was the 101st

Foot, and a well-drilled and efficient depôt did they possess, then quartered in the north of Scotland, the regiment itself being scattered over some five hundred miles of frontier in Canada West ; and as I drove into the barrack-gates, and marked the alert sentry, the lounging guard, and the smart non-commissioned officers hurrying about, my Eton impudence was impressed with a feeling of respect for my future corps ; and with a bashfulness the fifth form had not totally eradicated, I walked up to a tall erect serjeant, who was pacing to and fro on the parade, and requested to be informed which were the adjutant's quarters. His quick eye had detected my name on the portmanteau, then being lifted off my post-chaise, and ere he replied, he drew himself up still more, and *saluted his officer*. That salute made a man of me ; and I am convinced I grew two inches during my conversation with this respectful warrior, as he ushered me into the presence of my former correspondent and obedient servant, Lieutenant and Adjutant Tompion, who, with Major O'Toole, the commanding officer, was poring over a large inter-lined volume in the orderly-room. I took it all in at a glance : the boarded-floor, the deal table, the stand for measuring recruits, the extreme bareness of walls and furniture, the few articles of necessity, looking, as in fact they were, capable of being packed up in five minutes, the only litter consisting of two or three single-sticks, a pattern knapsack, and the orderly-

room clerk, a sort of knight-templar, half warrior and half scribe. From these my astonished eyes travelled over the persons of commanding-officer and adjutant, the former a jolly-looking, round little man, close-shaved and clean, in most unmistakeable plain clothes, having nothing military-looking whatever about him ; the latter a gaunt, weather-beaten officer, with enormous hands and feet, clad in a threadbare blue coat and much-worn pair of scales, without sword, or sash, or any offensive weapon save a stupendous pair of brass spurs, and whose duty seemed to consist in keeping one of his huge fingers pressed on the folio before him, and agreeing cordially with the Major in all his proposals.

‘ Oh, Mr. Grand !’ says the Major, ‘ how do you do, sir ; we expected you yesterday. Hope you have had a pleasant journey. Tompion, you wrote to Mr. Grand to say when he was to join ?’

‘ Yes, sir ; I wrote to inform Mr. Grand his leave would be out on the 31st.’

I apologized for the mistake, saying I understood I was not to join till the 1st.

‘ Never mind,’ said the Major ; ‘ when you have been with us a little longer, you will find out we always get as much leave as we can, so you have only begun on the usual system. But I see my horses waiting. Good morning, Mr. Grand ; we shall see you at mess, at half-past seven ; no occasion to come in uniform, as I suppose your baggage is only

just arrived. We shall not trouble you much with drill for a day or two, till you are fairly settled. Tompion, you will show Mr. Grand his quarters, and anything worth seeing about the barracks ; I leave him in your hands. Good morning !' And the jolly major swaggered off for his afternoon ride.

'Come,' thought I, 'these are very pleasant people I have got amongst ; I think I shall like it. And now to see what sort of a fellow Lieutenant and Adjutant John Tompion is.' Accordingly, as I walked across the barrack-yard with my new acquaintance, I endeavoured, by asking him a few questions as to the customs of the service, to gain some little insight into my new profession ; but no ; Tompion, though an excellent adjutant, and as steady a drill as ever over-looked the 'awkward squad' blundering through the 'goose-step,' had not an idea beyond his own duty, and that of the serjeant-major. I gave him a capital cigar, one of a lot that I had bought from Hudson, for the express purpose of joining with, and I thought he was disposed to look upon me in a more favourable light after this demonstration ; but it was with a sort of dull surprise, as that of one who should see a child unbreeched handling a dice-box, or Tom Thumb struggling with an eighteen-foot salmon-rod ; and I have no doubt that I must have appeared a mere baby in the veteran eyes of Lieutenant Tompion, who had been twenty-five years in the service, working his way, without

friends or purchase-money, up to his present position. Be that as it may, he seemed relieved to hand me over to the attention of the quarter-master, a much fatter and more communicative individual, to whose good-nature and activity I owed the comfort of getting my things unpacked, and my bran-new goods and chattels shaken down, for the first time, in my own barrack-room.

'Dandy' Grand, as I had been at Eton, and still was, never in my life was my toilet for the dinner-table more carefully arranged than on that day. Boy as I was, I had shrewdness enough to know the advantage of first impressions; and I felt that from that evening I must take my position in the regiment I had entered. Accordingly, as I walked across the barrack-yard to what was termed the 'little-mess room'—the apartment in which the officers met before dinner—I glanced down at my neat and well-arranged toilet, and congratulated myself on having hit off the happy medium between foppery and carelessness that was most appropriate to a man-party. Long ere half the introductions to my new comrades were completed, the bugles marshalled us in to dinner with the appropriate air of 'The Roast Beef of Old England;' and it was with a most confused notion of the different individuals owning the names of Smith, Brown, Guthrie, Random, Captain Levanter, and Dr. Squirt, that I took my place for the first time at the mess of the 101st Foot.

Cordiality, mirth, and jollity reigned paramount ; later in the evening, perhaps, there was a shade of 'tipsy revelry ;' but in the presence of Major O'Toole, who sat at the right hand of Ensign Spooner, president for the week, and who told some most marvellous stories to his admiring audience, everything was conducted within the bounds of propriety. Constant were the calls—' Mr. Grand, the pleasure of a glass of wine,'—' Grand, a glass of wine with you ; and as all these convivial challenges had to be replied to, and my new comrades pledged in the standard mess-wines, strong port and sherry, a more seasoned brain than mine might be excused for owning in a slight degree the influence of so many bumpers as I was obliged to quaff.

Some of the officers, then quartered at the depôt, had seen a good deal of service in India, the Peninsula, and elsewhere ; and after Major O'Toole had taken his departure, which he forebore from doing until *we* had swallowed an infinity of his wonderful anecdotes, and *he* his full share of the ' Prince Regent's allowance'—as a certain quantity of the mess-wines is termed—a chosen few of us gathered round the fire, and ordering a fresh supply of port, proceeded to make ourselves comfortable for an extraordinary sitting in honour of a new companion-in-arms.

' He's no flincher,' said old Brevet-Major Halberd, a veteran tanned into mahogany by hard service, and

a most religious adherence to port wine and brandy-and-water in every climate of the globe—'he's no flincher, that lad,' as he eyed, with marked approbation, the steadiness with which I filled my eleventh bumper of port.

'I think he'll do, at least for a young one,' replied Ensign Spooner, a beardless warrior, some two years my junior, but whose six months' seniority in the Army List gave him all the advantage of comparatively an old hand.

I marked his flushed countenance and wandering eye, as he made his remark, and thought to myself, 'Dandy Grand will see you out, my boy, or his Eton education and his bill at 'The Christopher' goes for nothing.'

'But, Major,' said Captain Levanter, resuming a conversation that our move to the fireplace had interrupted, 'you never finished that out-post story; and I dare say Mr. Grand, and some of our young ones, would like to hear it.'

'By all means, Major,' was the unanimous cry; 'let us have a yarn of the Peninsula.'

If the proverb, *In vino veritas*, has any truth, the officers of the British army must be indeed devoted to their profession, as whenever they exceed their ordinary moderation in the pleasures of the table, their discourse invariably turns to what they call 'pipe-clay,'—a term which must be explained to the civilian to mean all and everything connected with

the stirring scenes, the lights and shades of military life.

‘Well,’ said the Major, ‘if you young fellows like to hear it, you are welcome to the story, though it tells sadly against myself, since I was outwitted, by Gad!—outwitted by a Frenchman! But this was the way it came off. You were all children then, except my old friend Squirt; and he looked older than he does now, for he had not mounted a wig in those days. But I was, even at that early period of history, a lieutenant in a regiment of light infantry; which, from one cause and another, was so short of officers, that I found myself, one fine morning, in command of an important outpost, close to the enemy’s lines. There was a mill near my position, and a rapid stream, pretty deep too, which looked to me a tempting sort of a place to throw a fly—a sport, my boys, that, in my humble opinion, beats cock-fighting! Well, I was smoking my weed, after a light and wholesome dinner off a piece of black bread and the outside of an onion, when a brown, dirty-looking fellow, who swore he was the miller, and who talked Spanish, and stunk of garlic like a true ‘patriot,’ asked to have an interview with ‘my Excellency;’ and with many compliments, and a great deal of translating by signs,—for my knowledge of Spanish was not equal to my taste in sherry,—he begged of me to allow him to place a couple of planks across the stream, to enable him to carry his

sacks to the mill. I never suspected 'a plant' of any kind, and gave the beggar leave to do what he wished, more particularly as I could see the men grinning at his cursed volubility, and my bad Spanish and queer gestures, and I was in a hurry to get rid of him. Off he went, apparently very well satisfied; and in an hour's time I saw a couple of planks had been placed across the mill-stream, and a very commodious foot-bridge constructed by their means. Whether my old colonel thought me too young for 'the situation,' or whether it was accidental, I know not, but I was providentially relieved that very evening by my own captain—poor fellow, I saw him afterwards killed at Badajoz,—and the very first thing he did, on reconnoitering his ground, was to kick the miller's planks into the stream, and put two extra sentries within sight of the spot where he had made his foot-bridge. Would you believe it?—the very next morning his post was threatened by a squadron of chasseurs, who finding themselves unsupported, retired, after exchanging a shot or two; and a large body of French infantry marched down to the exact spot where the foot-bridge had been erected, commanded by the Spanish miller in person, attired in the uniform of 'Capitaine of the Deuxième Leger.' The clever rascal had disguised himself as a Spaniard, and a miller to boot, and having to do with a young one, almost succeeded in his ingenious plan of forming a means of transport for his com-

pany, which he hoped on the morrow to lead to victory, in a brilliant affair of outposts. That fellow was born to be an actor,' concluded the Major; 'and I dare say he is one by this time, for a Frenchman can turn his hand to anything. Pass the liquor, Spooner; talking always makes me so devilish thirsty.'

That evening, like many others in the 101st Foot, concluded with broiled bones, brandy-and-water, cigars, songs, and choral accompaniments, wofully out of tune. I have, even at this distant period, a dim recollection of an imposing war-dance, performed round the mess-table, to the heroic air of 'The British Grenadiers,' and of our carrying Spooner to bed, in a sort of triumphal procession, in which, as the soberest of the party, I bore the huge silver candelabrum and its load of wax lights. After parade at nine, the following morning, I again met my comrades, Spooner included, clean, fresh, and merry, as though they lived on toast-and-water, and went to bed at ten o'clock.

Let me pass over the first two months of military life, taken up, as it was, with my initiation into all the mysteries of war,—'goose-step,' 'extension motions,' 'manual and platoon exercise,' and all the other intricacies of what is termed 'squad drill.' My principal instructor was a stalwart serjeant of the light company, whose heart and soul were bound up in the profession he had adopted. 'Carry the

butt of your firelock half an inch more to the rear, Mr. Grand,' would exclaim this warlike enthusiast; 'half an inch, sir, makes all the difference; and no object in nature is more beautiful than a well-carried musket.' How people's ideas of the picturesque must vary!

However, the two months soon passed over, and I was judged capable of being dismissed my drill, and taking my duty; but in the short period which I had spent in the society of my brother officers, I had gained an insight into their several habits, and into the character of the regiment, which convinced me that 'Dandy Grand' was destined for a higher flight than a marching corps in country quarters; and already I nourished hopes of obtaining an exchange into some crack cavalry regiment, or—summit of my ambition!—an appointment to 'the Guards.' The fact is, the 101st was a slang regiment; even the best of them, as I considered him, Captain Levanter, the only officer who, in my secret heart, I deemed a fitting companion for Sir Peregrine's son, even he was given to driving tandems, and such other vulgar accomplishments; and one of my first triumphs was the winning 'a pony' of the captain, as to the feasibility of driving a pair of hired horses, harnessed tandem-fashion, in and out of the barrack gate, a very awkward turn, placed at an acute angle with the street, a feat which I accomplished in a trot, according to the terms of the wager. Levanter

never paid me, but was good enough to grant me his friendship ever after—a boon of which I have no doubt he over-estimated the value,—and we soon became inseparable companions. The older officers shook their heads at our escapades, but amongst the young ensigns and lieutenants we were perfect demi-gods. I bought two very clever horses, which he and I drove, by turns, to the admiration of the High-street. I won a pigeon-match of Mr. M'Dookit, the sporting lawyer of that locality. I rode Major O'Toole's black mare, for a bet of half-a-crown, backwards and forwards over the gate that led to our parade-ground; and, as I was better dressed, smoked better cigars, and drank more wine than any member of the mess under the rank of a field officer, it is no wonder that I was considered rather 'a great card' at the depôt of a marching regiment in country quarters.

The weeks slipped away pleasantly enough: one day will serve for a specimen of the rest, as they varied but little in the nature of the pursuits and amusements they afforded. A struggle to get up and be dressed in time for parade, at nine, was the invariable commencement. I buckle my sword-belt and tie my sash as I run down stairs, and make my appearance on parade in time to salute the Major before the officers proceed to inspect their respective companies. The rear-rank of No. 2 is my especial charge, and I walk down the front and up the rear

with the air of a perfect martinet. Brown's knapsack is hung too high, Smith's pouch is put on too low, and Murphy is sent to drill for 'unsteadiness in the ranks.' The Major walks down, and compliments me on the progress I make in my duty. The bugles sound—the band plays—the four companies we boast of, form, and march past, saluting Major O'Toole as if he were the Duke of York; the officers fall out, the parade is dismissed, and I go to breakfast. When that elaborate meal is finished, Levanter kindly accepts one of my cigars, links his arm in mine, and we proceed down the town to play out our match at billiards, in which he gives me five out of a hundred, and wins by a stroke. (Levanter can play billiards better than any man in England, and what I have learnt of this crafty game I owe to his tuition, though I must confess my instructor did not teach me gratis.) The admiring Spooner looks on, and, in his regard and affection for myself, loses a five-pound note, or as he calls it, 'a fiver,' to my antagonist. We return to the barracks to readjust our toilets before appearing at 'the gardens,' where our drums and fifes will delight the fair admirers of the military with all the last year's waltzes and polkas, and an occasional quick step or 'gallop;' and here I devote my attentions to Miss Jones, the fort-major's daughter, a crafty young lady of two or three and thirty, with whom I fancy myself in love. Miss Jones hovers undecided between Levanter and myself,

but thinks she has the most chance with the young one, and, as she herself would say, 'rather inclines to Grand.' Like all boys, I am not very good at love-making, and the more I find I care for Miss Jones, or 'Fanny,' as I begin to call her to myself, the greater difficulty I have, notwithstanding much encouragement on her part, in telling her so. On the afternoon I am now describing, I got rather further than usual, and found courage to inquire 'for what fortunate individual Miss Jones intended the small nosegay of violets she was carrying?' 'Oh my! Mr. Grand, I'm sure I don't know. Pa asked me for one, and I wouldn't give it him. Are you fond of violets?' Of course ere I escorted Miss Jones to her home, with its green blinds and brass knocker, one of the half-withered, earthy-smelling violets had found its way to the inside of my blue coat. But we had not yet got much further than this sort of harmless flirtation.

'Are you nearly dressed, Grand?—the trap is at the door,' said Levanter, some half hour after our return from the gardens, as he made his appearance in my barrack-room, 'got up' most elaborately in plain clothes adapted for a very smart dinner-party. He was a fresh-coloured, good-looking man, above the middle size, and inclined to be stout; and as, with his dark hair immensely brushed, his whiskers curled to the very tips, a stupendous white neckcloth, gold-embroidered waistcoat, and blue coat with gilt buttons,

he burst into my room, he looked a handsome fellow enough, but wanted a something I could not describe—a sort of finish, to give him the real air of a gentleman.

‘Let me put on my driving-coat,’ was the reply, ‘and then forward.’ Another five minutes saw us bowling along outside the town with a pair of quick, high-stepping horses, my property, the leader at an easy canter, the wheeler trotting some twelve miles an hour, on our way to ex-provost M‘Intyre’s villa, to which we had been invited, on the occasion of one of that municipal grandee’s great feeds.

‘What snobs these fellows are,’ said Levanter to me; ‘you and I dine with this provost because it suits us, but he is a very vulgar dog, and I should cut him if I were to meet him in London.’

‘I do not agree with you,’ was my reply. ‘This man is an unaffected, business-like fellow, a good specimen of a plain, hospitable Scotch tradesman, and he sets up for nothing more. Where there is no pretension there can be no vulgarity, Levanter; and while I respect such a man as M‘Intyre, there is nothing I have such a contempt for as a fellow who likes to be thought a greater man than Nature and position have made him.’ This, I fear, was an unintentional thrust that my companion did not half relish, as I saw the colour settle for an instant in his cheek, and his brow darken with a scowl I had before noticed when anything occurred to displease him; but he

was a man of the most perfect self-command, and if my unlucky observation had made him an enemy for life, he would not have allowed his feelings to be discovered for an instant by the expression of his countenance. He was facetious and agreeable as ever during our drive, and ere we arrived at the ex-provost's villa, we were chatting in our usual familiar and unconstrained manner.

The dinner went off, as dinners do when sped by Highland hospitality ; and Levanter and I got into our tandem to drive home, with heated brains, and spirits somewhat too much exhilarated for that particular mode of progression.

As we rattled along by moonlight on our way to the barracks, and smoked our cigars at an hour when a cigar is most enjoyable, the conversation unfortunately turned upon the merits of my leader, a high-bred, impetuous animal, that I fondly imagined would be capable of distinguishing himself in a hunting-country, and of whose jumping prowess I now boasted to my companion with intemperate eloquence. Levanter, who seemed more inclined to be argumentative, and less good-humoured than usual, rather nettled me by the taunting manner in which he doubted the powers of my horse, and, I imagined, by implication, the nerve of his owner. Young, reckless, and excitable, and more particularly now, when my blood was heated by the unusual strength of my potations, and my spirits half maddened by the exhi-

laration of 'the pace,' the moonlight, and the night air, this was more than I could stand; and as I felt the devil rising within me, I only longed for some opportunity of giving vent to the wild excitement that was boiling in my veins. Hotter waxed our argument as we galloped on, and ere we neared the town, personalities were freely exchanged, though with a sort of mock-civility, that to a listener would have been inexpressibly ludicrous. At last, stung to the quick by the cool reply of Levanter to some proposition I made about the horse in question—'Perhaps he might, if you had nerve to ride him,' I burst out, 'Nerve! will you have nerve to sit still, if I drive him at the turnpike-gate? I'll show you whether he can jump.'

I thought Levanter's cheek turned a shade paler in the moonlight, as he caught sight of the gate we were now rapidly approaching, looking most forbidding with its series of strong white-painted bars; but though his lip quivered for an instant, he only said, 'Drive on, and try; but hold them straight.' And ere the words were spoken, we were too near to be able to pull up at the pace we were going, even had we wished it. I shouted to my horses, and flogged the wheeler, who appeared inclined to waver in his desperate career; the calumniated leader pulling hard, and pointing his ears at the obstacle which he seemed determined to overcome. We were close upon the gate,—I heard

Levanter draw his breath hard, and felt the tension of the muscle of his leg against mine,—I saw my leader's back, as he rose high in air, and surmounted the barrier; I heard a tremendous crash, and two fearful bangs against the bottom of the dog-cart, as my wheeler strove to follow his example—and in another instant I was lying in the middle of the road, the surface of which, white as chalk in the moonlight, seemed spinning round and round;—one grasp with my hands, to endeavour to keep my position on what appeared a sloping and revolving plane, and that is all I can recollect of my ill-advised attempt to jump a turnpike-gate in a tandem!

If there is a dangerous period for youth—if there is a time when the morbid feelings of a false and fevered passion—the creature of the imagination, and not of the heart—exercise their most unbridled sway, it is surely when the frame is languidly recovering from a violent and dangerous illness; when the brain has been excited by fever, the reason weakened by debility, and the affections roused by conscious helplessness. Heaven help the youth, if in addition to all this, his recovery should take place, as mine did, during the balmy sunny days of a late spring, and be attended, as mine was, by a handsome woman, who has made up her own mind on a subject, in the carrying out of which it requires two to constitute 'a quorum.' Let the victim, besides all this, drink green tea, and read Byron; let him find himself quoting largely from *The Giaour*, *Parisina*, and the

Bride of Abydos, whilst he eschews with a conscious sensitiveness the bantering pages of *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, and we may safely vote him in that hopeless, helpless state which our astute brother Jonathan describes by the graphic title of a 'gone 'coon.' And so was it with me. Picked up by the turnpike-man and Levanter, with a fractured wrist, a sprained shoulder, and a concussion of the brain, I was carried into the fort-major's house, which overlooked the scene of action, and to which the master happened to be returning from a late sitting at mess. My companion escaped, as was but just, with no greater injury than a black eye and a scraped shin; but the unfortunate wheeler was so much damaged, that it was found necessary to destroy him; whilst the leader, the *teterrima causa* of all, kicked himself clear of everything, and galloped scathless home to his own stable. Of all these facts, I was informed in due course of time; as my first attempt at consciousness was some six-and-thirty hours after 'the smash,' when I found myself lying bandaged and helpless on a sofa-bedstead, in the major's sitting-room; whilst Fanny's long dark ringlets trailed over my face, and I felt her breath upon my brow, as she busied herself about my couch. I was not sure that all this was real; nor was it till at least a week afterwards that I was able to recollect any of the circumstances connected with the accident, or, stranger still, the events that took place some hours before it.

By degrees, I got better, then stronger, and at last, thanks to Squirt's skill and Fanny's nursing, I was able to sit up; but healed as were the outward wounds in my attenuated frame, an internal injury had been inflicted during my recovery, which it took me many a long day to get over—ay, which, embittering as it did my earlier years, was remembered as a gloomy warning in after life, to the stifling and destruction of the purest, holiest feelings of my heart.

I need not now be ashamed to confess that I loved Fanny Jones—ay, loved her with an energy, an infatuation, in my then state of weakness, which was little short of insanity. What was she?—an old barrack-master's daughter, a garrison flirt, hardly a lady by birth, and certainly no fitting mate for haughty Sir Peregrine's son. Good Heavens! he would have sunk into the earth could he have but suspected the truth; and yet I loved her. With all the enthusiasm of boyhood—with all the sincerity and single-heartedness of a child—with the romantic adoration of a dreamer, I loved Fanny Jones. She managed it very cleverly. I have since learnt it was her last resource. But she was playing with edged tools, and came not herself scathless out of the unequal contest. In vain Major O'Toole, performing what he considered his duty, warned me repeatedly that I 'was much too thick with Miss Jones.' In vain old Halberd came to sit with me

for hours after parade, and laughed at me for being 'such a spoon.' In vain the young ensigns quizzed, and whispered, as much as they dared, 'what a flat Grand was, to be hooked by such a flirt as that!' The only person that seemed to encourage me in my folly, and to assist me with his counsel and friendship, was Levanter; and I found out in time that his was no disinterested aid.

It was some weeks before I could return to my own quarters in the barracks; and as I sat with Fanny, drinking in the summer air at the open window, and enjoying the fragrance of the flowers she knew so well how to dispose about the room,—as I watched her graceful head bending over the work that those long, drooping ringlets half concealed,—as I noticed the smothered sigh that would sometimes break upon these long delicious silences,—as I almost shrunk from that upward glance that thrilled to my very soul,—the poison gradually but surely worked its insidious way into my being; and ere my convalescence was declared established—ere I was removed by the doctor's fiat from that cherished scene, I had poured my love-tale into no unwilling ear, and had plighted my faith (the faith of a scapegrace of eighteen) to Fanny Jones. Well might I have said, with the sluggard who so quaintly reproves the undue punctuality of his valet: 'You have waked me too soon; let me slumber again.' Well might I have wished to dream on, though ruin and disgrace

had been the penalty, rather than be wakened so roughly, as was my lot, from that delirious trance.

I have said that Levanter assisted me much in arranging that my interviews with my lady-love might be uninterrupted; and many a time did he detain the old fort-major over his eternal back-gammon-board, whilst she and I enjoyed our lover-like *tête-à-têtes* in what was now considered my own apartment. The captain generally appeared after parade, and kindly relieved the tedium of my convalescence by a quiet game at 'écarte' or 'lansquenet,' which, in the impossibility of the 'billiard lesson,' served well enough as a pastime to the instructor, who repaid himself to a very sufficient tune for his time and trouble. After this, he would good-naturedly devote himself to back-gammon and the fort-major, by which means we were left in uninterrupted bliss, as my brother-officers, who would otherwise have kindly come to sit with me, thought I was in very good hands during the long visits of Levanter.

Things went on in this way prosperously enough. Fanny and I talked over our loves and our future *ménage*: I quite made up my mind to leave the army (having been a soldier about four months), and had actually determined to apply for a fortnight's leave of absence, that I might visit Sir Peregrine, on the hopeless task of gaining his consent to our marriage, when the merest accident discovered to the infatuated victim the trap which had been so

judiciously concealed, and so temptingly baited for his destruction.

After my thorough recovery left no excuse for remaining any longer under the fort-major's roof, I returned to my own barrack-room,—now, how dreary a solitude!—but morning after morning, directly the parade was dismissed, I sped, like a bird to its mate, down to the well-known house, there to spend the long summer's day with Fanny in her boudoir; and how wearily passed the dull hours of that on which my duty as Orderly confined me to the barracks, when my only consolation was a crossed and re-crossed epistle from my *fiancée!*

One bright May morning, it was again my turn of duty to remain a close prisoner within the barrack-gate, to see the men's dinners properly cooked, their rooms and passages properly cleaned, and dismiss their afternoon parade in *propria persona*, when, as luck would have it, Spooner, whose expectation of some visitor would keep him all day in his quarters, kindly volunteered to take this irksome duty off my hands, and the major, contrary to custom, allowed the exchange to take place after guard-mounting at ten o'clock; consequently, I was not expected at the fort-major's, and thither I sped with even more than my usual alacrity, as soon as Spooner was installed in my place. The birds sang, the flowers bloomed, and the fresh breeze blithesomely fanned my cheek, as I hurried down to the dwelling of my love. How

happy I was! I might have known by that very fact, by the exuberance, the bounding delight of my excited spirits, that a damper must be in store for this excess of joy. So has it ever been with me,—so, I suppose, in this equally-balanced world, it ever is. Full of the happy surprise I should give Fanny, I stole noiselessly past the maid who was cleaning the major's white door-steps, and who was so accustomed to my presence that she never remarked me, and on tiptoe I crept upstairs, and through the drawing-room, to the door of Fanny's boudoir. It was ajar, and on my startled ear broke the sob of my beloved one in distress. Another step in advance, and my young blood rushed to my brain, till I heard each pulsation like the stroke of a church-clock upon the nerve. My heart sickened; I gasped for breath; but I *would not* fall. With my hand grasping the back of a chair (her work), I steadied myself to gaze upon a sight that well-nigh broke my boyish heart. Fanny in the arms of Levanter!—her head upon his shoulder, and weeping as if in the bitterest anguish and despair! We have all a certain degree of energy—call it rather pluck—which, if we will but summon it, nerves us *to bear*; and, like an Indian at the stake, heedless of the dishonour that might be imputed to the act—heedless of all but my burning, quenchless, eager thirst for *the truth*, to know the whole, to know the worst—I stood, unobserved, near the treacherous pair, and listened to her pleading voice.

Sentence after sentence fell like ice upon my heart—sentence after sentence disclosed a scheme of guilt and perfidy, of which I, the devoted, the true, the faithful, was to have been the victim. Levanter's low tones would occasionally grate upon my ear in exculpation or commentary, proving him not only an accomplice, but the originator of the plot. Between her broken sobs and caresses, she told her guilty tale; and when, at the conclusion of a passionate appeal to his honour, to his love, to his better feelings, to marry her while there was yet time to save her from her alliance with myself—to let her stay with him, her first, her only love, in any place, in any climate, she added, with a touch of womanly feeling that half-redeemed her perfidy—'otherwise, dear, dearest Richard, I must marry him before it is too late. Poor Grand! poor fellow, so young, so handsome, and so devoted! Ah, Richard! had we never met, I could have loved him dearly and faithfully; but now——' I rushed from the house ere a burst of grief should unman and discover me, and speeding back to my barrack-room, I locked the door, and threw myself on the bed in a passion of misery which wellnigh approached madness. The whole of that day and night appear to me now to have been passed under the influence of some horrid nightmare, and it was not till the bugles sounded the Reveillé the following morning that I returned to a thorough consciousness of my identity and my position. The worldling may sneer at woes such as

were then mine—the boarding-school miss, with her overwrought sensibility, may wonder that I ever recovered from them; but he who studies human nature carefully—who looks below the surface—while he appreciates and pities my boyish agony, will see in my very youth the best restorative, the most potent antidote to despair.

My brother officers behaved most kindly to me in my distress. They saw I was afflicted, though they knew not, or only partially guessed, the cause. Major Halberd, whom I had the sense to take into my confidence, scouted the idea of 'calling out' Levanter, which was the first intention of my inexperience; and ere long his judicious kindness and sympathy won from me the confession that I had had an escape for which I ought indeed to be thankful. 'Better hush it all up, my boy,' said the old campaigner: 'Levanter is gone on leave, and when you meet again, I advise you not to allude to this ticklish subject; take my word for it, *he* wont, and this will be a good opportunity for you to break off your intimacy with him. I don't wish to say a word against a comrade, but Levanter *knows a good deal*, and you are just as well out of his hands. As for Miss Jones—whew!' And here the major gave vent to his feelings in a prolonged whistle, which clearly showed his opinion of my faithless flame. But well-meant as all this consolation assuredly was, I confess that I was not thoroughly cured till, having

officiated at a board, which granted our drum-major his discharge from the service one fine summer's day, the next morning startled the town with the intelligence that that stout, well-whiskered, and musical individual had eloped with the fort-major's daughter. Fanny Jones, who might have been Lady Grand at some future time, became Mrs. Dubbs; and it is whispered that Dubbs, since he has left his harmonious command, has taken to drinking!

It cured me of love for many a day; and when I embarked with a draft to join the head-quarters of my regiment in America, I was once more as devil-may-care an ensign as ever made a rally from seasickness at the commencement of his 'life on the ocean wave.'

CHAPTER II.

WESTWARD HO!

IT is proverbially a dispensation of Providence for manning the British navy and giving thews and sinews to the merchant service, that a mania should seize upon boys of tender years, irresistibly impelling them to adopt the sea as their profession, long before nature has given them the power of judging for themselves in 'the knowledge of good and evil.' How often do we hear the veteran seaman declare that, had he known the discomforts and miseries to be endured 'afloat,' he would sooner have spent the prime of his manhood two hundred feet down a coal-mine, than within the creaking ribs of one of Britannia's 'wooden walls.' But loathsome as is the smell of 'bilge water,' and the other odours that too often emanate from 'between decks,' and uncomfortable as it most assuredly is to have no elbow room for shaving, short allowance of fresh water for necessary ablutions, and a continually changing 'fulcrum' to stand upon whilst you draw on your boots, yet once on deck, all such petty annoyances are discarded and forgotten. You feel

the wild fresh ocean breeze, the same uncontaminated current that has swept without interruption over its thousands of miles to speed you on your course; the glittering waters are dancing in the sun; there is beauty on the wave and health upon the gale; and if, being a landsman, your enjoyment in all this is enhanced by the sense of variety, you are disposed to admit that, after all, a sea-life has its own peculiar charms.

‘I wish breakfast was ready; what an appetite this sea-air gives one!’ said old Halberd to me, as we paced the deck of one of her Majesty’s vessels denominated Government Transport, No. 7. We had been fairly in blue water for nearly a week; sea-sickness and its accompanying lassitude and misery were now completely got over; the men came readily to the ‘tub’ to receive their allowance of grog, a potation seldom relished by an enfeebled stomach, and we had all settled down to the regularity of a sea-life.

In that little speck upon the waste of waters were crowded together seven officers, including Halberd, Ensign Spooner, and myself,—one lady, much admired, nay, adored, as ladies always are on board ship, and rejoicing in the name of Tims, whose husband, Captain Tims, was likewise a fellow-voyager—a hundred and fifty men, with a fair proportion of serjeants and corporals, and, fortunately, but few women—and the ship’s company, numbering some

most eccentric characters, and commanded by honest Captain Merryweather, the most jovial tar that ever paced 'his fisherman's walk, two steps and over-board,' and whose round, goodhumoured face, and short, square, powerful form ever met me when I made my morning appearance with the same greeting—'Turned out early, Mr. Grand!—keep all your watches below, eh?' this piece of sea-waggery being usually followed by a sharp interrogative to the man at the wheel, 'How's her head?' 'Thank you, her head is a good deal better, and she has quite got over her sea-sickness,' is the reply coming from the pale wan face of Captain Tims, whose emaciated form is now seen slowly creeping up the hatchway, and whose innocence and inexperience mistook the honest skipper's question as to the course his old tub of a bark was steering, for a courteous inquiry after the health of his lady-wife. Up comes the steward, an important functionary, with hair curling all over his head in a profusion of clustering ringlets that would shame a poodle, and announces breakfast. At that magical word the deck is deserted, and with many compliments to Mrs. Tims, due to her early appearance, we sit down, a right merry hungry party, to our maritime fare.

'Mrs. Tims, will you be good enough to beat up another egg—we want some more milk, and that is our substitute. Major, tell the steward to fry some more ham.'

'After all, salt butter and biscuit beats everything for breakfast,' says the enthusiastic Spooner, whose verdancy is a fund of amusement to the skipper. That jovial personage bursts into a hearty laugh, and promises Spooner 'soft tommy' when he gets to Quebec. The would-be facetious ensign thinks this must mean some dish composed, as he has heard the London sausages are, of an assassinated cat, and Merryweather, between his roars of laughter, tells him that he may taste 'the cat' if he fancies it, without leaving the ship; and so they ring the changes on a seaman's vocabulary, entirely a different language from that spoken by the English nation on shore. But the steward rushes in, having seen a shoal of porpoises to windward, bearing straight for the ship, and determined, as that confiding animal generally is, to run right under her bows. This is too good a chance of variety to be lost, and we start from our half-finished breakfasts to see the rollicking strangers pursue their course, regardless of all interruptions from small shot and ball, none of which seem to have the slightest effect on the tough hides of these marine monsters. There is something to my fancy extremely wild in the aspect of a shoal of porpoises, bound as it were on some especial lark, with their heads all the same way, pitching and lurching through the briny element, as though they quite enjoyed the idea of having nothing to stop them between the coast of Ireland and the Gulf of

Mexico. Right under our bows dashes the ungainly convoy, and I could swear that bottle-nosed laggard, the last of the shoal, and bearing, as we all exclaimed, a striking likeness to Spooner, winked at us with his roguish little eye like some ocean-hog, as he dipped his black snout into the emerald wave, and turned up his nether end, as if to bid us farewell. Far on our lee we watch them on their course, till the dark ruffled horizon hides them from our sight, and we talk of them as folks on shore would of the coming Derby, or the late Exhibition. If 'anything's fun in the country,' surely anything is excitement at sea. What should we do without whist?—an accomplishment that in my earliest years I foresaw it was necessary to master, and the study of which I now turned to a tolerably profitable account.

Luncheon is over in our little ocean-home, and the dead-lights are up, for it has began to blow rather fresh, and is evidently brewing up for a gale. The cabin is small, dark, and somewhat close, but we are roughing it now, and must not be over-particular, more especially as flirting Mrs. Tims bears all the disagreeables of a transport without a murmur, and is now sitting, in the most piquante of caps, teaching Spooner backgammon. Alas! poor boy, with the guileless enthusiasm of eighteen, he is drinking in deep draughts of love from those mischievous blue eyes—sport to you, Julia Tims! but death (for the present) to poor Spooner; and the only knowledge

he is obtaining of the venerable game is a conviction that his most unquestionably is a hit, hers, in all human probability, 'a gammon.' The unsuspecting, accommodating Tims and myself cut as partners, and the Fates ordained that Spooner should be roused from his happy dream to join our game in the seat opposite his commanding officer, of whom he has a wholesome terror, and to endure old Halberd's rowing in no measured terms, when absence of mind or deficiency of memory shall cause the loss of a single trick. Tims could play a little, and young as I was, I had already learned that skill in all games of chance or science was the readiest method of eking out an insufficient allowance, and administering to an extravagant disposition; so, with the advantage of superior play on our side, we 'walked into' our adversaries' stakes to as large an amount as old Halberd's pay and allowances would stand.

Game succeeded game, and rubber gave place to rubber, and the commandant waxed furious. 'Good heaven! Spooner, you trumped your partner's best again! Couldn't you see the ace was out? Why, the devil, you should bottle up your king. Any one but a born fool would have played his knave.' Poor Spooner, sitting on thorns because Mrs. Tims can overhear all these compliments, and at length utterly confused by his own losses and his partner's ire, terminates his ill-fated performances by an unequivocal 'revoke,' and the major's ire blazes forth unchecked

—‘Go to your cabin, sir, and consider yourself under arrest; in the whole course of my experience, I never met anything like this. You laugh, Mr. Grand, and well you may, for you have won a small fortune through my partner’s inexplicable conduct. Nothing shall persuade me it was not done on purpose,’ foamed the exasperated major; ‘but I’ll have a Court of Inquiry. I’ll try him for his commission. I’ll drive him out of the service; by Jove, I will.’

Enter the poodle-headed steward to lay the cloth for dinner: the angry commandant, whose plumes are always smooth at that interesting hour, is easily appeased, and Spooner has the good taste, as his *chef* has the good sense, to make no further allusions to the row, the losses, and the arrest. Dinner progresses favourably, although we are compelled to put our plates upon our knees and our glasses in our pockets; for the gale is increasing, and the skipper, contrary to his usual practice, and far against his inclination, is compelled to remain on deck. Ere our meal is concluded, we are startled by the unearthly notes of a speaking-trumpet overhead, followed by a faint reply—‘We are speaking a ship’—and off we all fly to have a look at the stranger. Pitching bows under, with a double reef in her topsails, and some of her bellying canvas aback to enable her to hold off and on, a dirty-looking brig looms distinctly against the dark, cloudy background. Her master, in language that none but a seaman could understand, is

inquiring his proper longitude, his own reckoning being of the loosest description. She is from Buenos Ayres, bound for Liverpool, and has no more business off the coast of Labrador, her present position, than we should have at Gibraltar. We set her right as to her locality, and labouring on in our diverse courses, we part, never to meet again. She is soon lost to our sight, for driving mists are scudding over the face of the waters, though an occasional warm gleam of sunshine gives a magic charm to the scene.

‘What a heavenly day on shore!’ says Spooner to me, as we pace the deck, smoking our after-dinner cigars, and ever and anon staggering to leeward when our grasp misses the stay, that should have steadied us. ‘What a day in some quiet retreat in beautiful England, Grand, with a person—I mean with a lady, that is,’ stammered the sentimental ensign—‘with a woman one really loved.’

Spooner always confided to me what he called ‘his better feelings,’ such as his present idolatry of another man’s wife, under the impression that my foolish entanglement with Miss Jones would ensure my sympathy in all affairs of the tender passion. Little did he know how that unfortunate business had seared and hardened my young heart, and changed all the softer feelings of my nature—how regret, remorse, and above all, a feeling of burning shame, had taken possession of me, whenever I looked back on that season of delirium, and made me

regard the sex in the light of an enemy on whom to be revenged at every convenient opportunity. Like many other young men, I fell into that most fatal of mistakes, 'that all women are alike.' How absurd a conclusion!—how disgraceful a slander on many a holy, virtuous, I had almost said, angelic being, that makes the glory and the sunshine of a happy home!

But I am interrupting Spooner's confidences with my reflections. As they came out between the puffs of his cigar, I confess I was startled at the length of absurdity to which a youth of eighteen may be carried, under the influence of a dreamy imagination. He confessed to me his adoration for Mrs. Tims, or 'Julia,' as he had the impudence to call her; he never seemed to consider Tims; he wished in the ardour of his attachment that she would fall overboard, that he, Spooner, might have the satisfaction of jumping after her to the rescue, (not a stroke could he swim,) and shutting his eyes to the probable case of drowning, and inevitable cold bath that must ensue, he seemed to fancy such a catastrophe would be really delightful; then he thought of asking her to run away with him, which was certainly not very feasible whilst we all remained packed up in a ship of four hundred tons; then he fancied she might get a divorce from Tims—a quiet, easy-going husband, that suited her exactly, and to whom at neart she was really attached—and that he might marry ner and sell out of the army; till at length I

ventured to ask him if he had ever mentioned the subject, or had hinted his attachment at all explicitly to the lady.

‘Why, no, not exactly,’ said the suffering youth; ‘but she is knitting me a purse, and I told her this morning that I should hate to arrive at Quebec, and I had never been so happy as when on board ship.’

‘And did she take the hint?’ I inquired, much amused at my companion’s cautious advances.

‘Why, she said she couldn’t bear the sea, and was bored to death with the ship,’ was the reply; ‘but then I think she did that to pique me!’

The burst of laughter with which I greeted this announcement, discomposed poor Spooner dreadfully, but I pointed out to him the absurdity of his romance, and the ridiculous mistake he was making, to suppose that the harmless flirtation with which Mrs. Tims was amusing herself, could amount to an infatuation that should lead her to sacrifice friends, home, position, and character for the sake of a boyish greenhorn, an ensign in a marching regiment. Unpalatable as this was, it did the poor fellow good, and I was proceeding with my lecture, in my new character of Mentor, when a cheer from between decks arose that shook the old transport from stem to stern, and looking to leeward, we descried, with a thrill I shall never forget, the first land we had seen since we left the coast of Britain.

Six long weeks had we been at sea, and truly it

was a glorious as well as a grateful sight. Rising like a curtain, the mist disclosed the rugged and picturesque coast of Labrador glowing in the lustre of a magnificent sunset. And oh! the richness of those varied tints to eyes so long accustomed to the weary water and the empty sky. Again and again was the cheer caught up and repeated by our delighted soldiers, and even the rough seamen cast a grim smile at that grand iron-bound coast. It is almost worth a voyage to see land for the first time. In our inexperience, we considered ourselves as fairly arrived, and from that moment began calculations and lotteries as to when we should reach our destination. The skipper alone appeared not to join in the general enthusiasm that prevailed. I observed him several times popping in and out of his cabin for constant consultation of the barometer; and I remarked that he remained on deck when, after dusk, we retired to the well-lighted cabin, and sat in for our accustomed game at *vingt-et-un*, accompanied by a special bowl of punch brewed by old Halberd, who was a very Falstaff in all matters of drink, and who knew exactly the right proportions that make rum, sugar, and lime-juice a beverage for the gods. We were so absorbed in the changes and chances of our game, that we scarcely remarked the increasing roll of the old transport, as she creaked and laboured in the trough of a heavy sea, and the constant scuffle and tramp of feet upon the deck above us; and when

I turned in, as sailors call it, for the night, to share a dormitory of some four feet square with my comrade Spooner, I was too sleepy to think of anything but the disagreeables of being roused at four to keep the morning watch, a duty which I most religiously shirked on every available opportunity.

That must have been a fearful night, ay, even to the gallant hearts on deck and aloft, exposed to the fury of the gale, and striving with might and main to put in practice all that science could teach and seamanship effect, to weather the storm. Boxed up in my stifling little cabin, I became conscious by degrees that our ship was rolling and pitching more than my previous experience would have led me to suppose possible. First my dreams became more and more incoherent and disturbed—then a tremendous lurch, that nearly sent me sprawling out of my berth, roused me to a state of complete wakefulness; and there I lay, anxiously listening to the complication of noises that surrounded me, with a horrible misgiving that this might be one of those serious cases of which every one has heard and read; and that as ships were doubtless occasionally wrecked, why not ours as well as another? This style of reasoning was not consolatory, and I had just made up my mind to put on some clothing, go at once on deck, and learn the worst,—though deterred, I know not why, by a foolish sense of shame at being the first to anticipate danger,—when another tremendous

lurch, a fearful pause, and a vibration as though the very timbers must part, followed by a crash as if the whole deck were breaking in upon our heads, startled me at once into activity, and I jumped on the deck of the cabin, just as Spooner, in a shaking voice from beneath his bed-clothes, exclaimed, 'By Jove, Grand, there's all the steward's crockery gone.'

I knew better; we had immediately righted, and I felt sure something must have gone by the board. As I staggered, half-clothed, and with naked feet, up the chilling hatchway, I was conscious of a buzzing murmur that made my very blood run cold—'Man overboard!—man overboard!' and then for the first time I knew that it was indeed a human voice that I had heard thrilling in agony above the crashing timber and the roaring blast. It was too true; the captain of the fore-top was at that moment choking in the blackening, boiling wave. The clear cold stars looked down in pitiless beauty on the engulfed seaman, struggling hopelessly, with none to help, with none to save. I caught a glimpse of the captain's pale and horror-stricken face, and I knew instinctively that it was folly to dream of boat or life-buoy in such a sea and such a gale. How soon might not we, too, be swept into eternity! In a second of time I pictured to myself the events of years. I saw dear old Haverley in all its verdant beauty: my poor father, ay, even Dr. Driveller flashed for an instant through my mind. The fa-

avourite pursuits of my youth came across me, and I could even feel with the doomed outlaw in the stirring Border ballad,—

My hounds may all run masterless,
My hawks may fly from tree to tree;

and then I manned myself, as I thought it was my duty to meet death, come in what shape it might, as a gentleman and a soldier. Though near, his icy hand was this time destined to grasp no other victim, and in a momentary lull, I had time to obtain a view of our position, and to exchange a cheering word or two with the gallant skipper. The night was clear and bright with stars, though blowing what sailors call 'great guns,' and the first thing that struck me was the nakedness of our spars as they danced against the sky, every inch of canvas that could be spared having been taken in. At times, I could see the whole of the vessel, as it were, plunging head-foremost away from me, as I steadied myself near the poop, and tremendous was the havoc made on her decks by a succession of heavy seas—everything had been carried away—seats, blocks, spare spars, hen-coops, everything that was moveable: and alas! alas! the last gigantic wave that struck her had borne to his doom honest Bill Sawyer, the smartest foretopman that ever handled sheet.

'No chance of saving him, Mr. Grand,' said poor Merryweather, with a trembling voice; 'the worst of it is over now, and this gale will lull before sun-

rise ; but it is God's providence that we were able to wear the old ship. It was impossible to tack, and this is not a night, sir, to have the coast of Labrador under your lee !'

As I went below, I found the companion-stairs and the cabin in a state of indescribable confusion—gentlemen in all sorts of costumes inquiring what had happened, and whether 'anything was the matter !'—all seemed to have turned out except old Halberd, who lay snugly ensconced in his blankets ; and when asked by Spooner, who went straight to his commanding officer's cabin for orders when he thought there was any danger, 'whether he did not mean to turn out ?' replied, 'Not I ; it's no business of mine ; I'm only a passenger !' As I groped my way in the dark towards my cabin, a soft hand was put within mine, and a gentle voice whispered in my ear, 'Is the danger over ? . . . Thank you, Mr. Grand : good night.' I was soon sound asleep after all my fatigues and excitement, but not before I had offered a short and fervent thanksgiving to Providence for our escape.

Could it be the same world that was melting around us in all the gorgeous brightness of a sunny noon, as one short week afterwards we glided listlessly along between the picturesque banks, whose woods, luxuriant in their verdure, fringe the noble St. Lawrence ! A monarch art thou of the waters, thou magnificent river, and wondrous is thy majesty

to one whose homage has been hitherto paid in ignorance to the puny wave of our own Father Thames. Historic associations, natural beauty, and early recollections hallow the latter ; but what shall we say of that gigantic stream, whose volume, supplied by the inexhaustible depths of Lake Erie, sweeps on through the giddy rapids, and the wondrous plunge of indescribable Niagara, to beautify the fairest portion of a continent, and only to find repose at length in the mighty bosom of the broad Atlantic Ocean ! The first impression of every European on visiting America appears to be the same. Everything is on a larger, grander, and more magnificent scale than in the old country. The rivers are wider, the forests more interminable, the storms darker, the sunshine brighter, and the skies higher, than those to which they have been accustomed at home ; and obtrusive as is sometimes the Yankee's noisy admiration of his unequalled States, he has, indeed, a glorious country, and well may he be proud of it.

All disembarkations are much the same, whether the released prisoners be an apoplectic alderman, with his fat wife and numerous daughters, stepping ashore at Ostend, or a draft of gallant musketeers bidding farewell to the coop which government has provided for a long and tedious voyage. Beautiful Quebec glittered as usual in the sun ; and our march up to the citadel, a mile and a half, and every inch of it against the collar, convinced us that, as

the acquisition of what sailors call sea-legs is most desirable to encounter a sou'-wester in the Atlantic, so are those same sea-legs very numbed and paralytic members to carry their owners up a steep and gravelled hill in anything like soldierlike style. We were received at head quarters—the strongly-fortified and jealously guarded citadel—with the welcome due to a fresh arrival of comrades to assist in 'doing duty,' and I found that my character as a 'fast lad,' and consequently an acquisition to the mess, had already preceded me from the depôt. My brother-officers I discovered, with hardly an exception, to be a jovial, good-humoured, gentlemanlike set of fellows, although one and all were tinged with a slight affectation of slang, engendered by foreign service, and a life of almost exclusively men's society, but which a tour of duty in England would soon and effectually have eradicated.

We were commanded by a character in his line; and Colonel Cartouch deserves a slight sketch from one whose youth he so carefully instructed in all matters connected with the sports of the field. Cartouch had entered the service originally in the artillery, and with some few others had effected an exchange from that exclusive corps to the line. He had then been in pretty nearly every regiment in the service, mounted and dismounted—horse, foot, and dragoons; as he himself said, 'he had a turn at them all.' In addition to this, during a short inter-

regnum of half-pay, he had joined 'the Queen of Spain's men,' where, by his own account, he saw some little fighting, and a good deal of flogging. In that sunny clime he had fallen in love with and married a Spanish girl, but of what degree, or under what circumstances, no one could tell. And here comes the mystery of Cartouch's character. He was never heard to touch upon the history of his marriage—no one knew whether he was a widower, or if Mrs. Cartouch was still alive. Of course, as in all cases where nothing is known, there were plenty of stories current, one more romantic and more horrible than another. The colonel had a Spanish servant, a forbidding-looking rascal as man should wish to see, but who had stuck to his master, and served him faithfully through all the ups and downs of his professional career. Rumour whispered that this fellow *once* let out in his cups a frightful history of the signora's jealousy and its consequences. Tall, handsome, of a spare athletic figure, with luxuriant black hair and whiskers, an adept at all feats of grace and skill, as at all games of chance or science; an extraordinary horseman, an unerring shot, a draughtsman of no mean pretensions, and a musician of exquisite taste, the colonel was one to make sad havoc in the female heart, and many a fair one has loved that beautiful face, with its reckless bandit expression, 'not wisely, but too well.' He knew his advantages, none better, and pushed them to the

utmost ; but when first I was acquainted with him, the number of his conquests appeared only to enhance his feelings of bitterness and contempt for the whole sex.

Watched by his wife with a jealousy that I fear had too much foundation, he was at last discovered. A Spanish woman roused, and more especially by such a passion, is not a character to hesitate for fear of consequences, and the young and beautiful rival—some whispered, too near a relative—fell by the wife's hand ; nor was her revenge satisfied with one victim ; like a fury, she turned from her sister's prostrate form upon the horror-stricken Cartouch, and the only circumstantial evidence borne by this ghastly tale is in the fact that whenever the Colonel's neck was bared, a long, grisly cicatrice disclosed itself, extending from ear to chin, as of one who had at some time received a deadly and frightful wound in the throat. When ladies resort to extreme measures such as these, a separation is decidedly advisable, and from that hour it was said Cartouch never saw his wife again. Assuredly his habits were not those of married life, and whether he was not happier in a state of single-blessedness and independence, it is not for me to decide. Some affected to disbelieve the whole story of his marriage and its concluding tragedy ; some said the Colonel had actually run away with the sister, and deserted her as he had deserted his wife. He never touched upon the sub-

ject himself, nor should I have liked to change places with that man who might be bold enough to interrogate him with regard to it; so it is impossible to say what may be the true version of the story. All I know is, that coming unexpectedly into his barrack-room upon one occasion, I found this hardened and sarcastic *roué*—this man of bitter feelings and iron heart, in tears of agony, which he vainly strove to conceal; and, hastily covered with his handkerchief, there lay on the table a long silky lock of glossy raven hair.

With all his faults, and they were many and inexcusable, I could not help liking Colonel Cartouch. From the first, notwithstanding the difference of our ranks and ages, we had become constant associates and allies. Our pursuits and pleasures were similar; the Mentor, with his advantages of experience, of course far outstripping his young competitor; but then it was his greatest delight to instruct and train 'little Grand,' as he called me, in all those accomplishments which we deemed so indispensable. It was the Colonel's team which I first learned to handle, as my instructor called it, 'like a workman.' It was the Colonel who first taught me to tie my own flies and throw them to an inch, although the only unwooded space around me was the stream I was fishing. It was the Colonel who showed me how to 'screw' and 'twist' at billiards, in a manner that would have made my old antagonist Levanter's hair stand on end; who proved to me *why* the sound and practical whist-

player must pull through in the long run, and *why* it was advisable to decline playing *ecarté* with a casual stranger of whom one knew nothing—more particularly if he happened to be a Frenchman. His explanations simplified the whole system of drill in the field, and regimental economy in the orderly-room, for there were few better officers than Cartouch. His knowledge of life and intimate acquaintance with our hospitable civilian friends, put me quite *au fait* at all usages of Canadian society ; and reaping, as I did, all these advantages from the Colonel's friendship, it was no wonder that I was above all others prejudiced in his favour, more especially as I fancied I could detect seeds of good, and evidences of kind feeling, in that reckless character, for which others did not give it credit. Of course our commanding officer, with his tastes and pursuits, was fond of racing. A regular attendant at Newmarket when in England, he was thoroughly awake to all the combinations and arrangements which make the turf so very ticklish a science to pursue. He knew something besides of Sir Peregrine's trainer, and his most unsuccessful 'string ;' and this was another bond of union between us. He owned four or five thorough-bred horses, some imported from England, some bred in the States, but all possessed of racing qualities ; and garrison cups, officers' plates, and other stakes to be contended for in both the Canadas, he carried off far and near.

I have already said that I was a tolerable horse-

man from my boyhood, and under the Colonel's and his trainer's instructions, I learned to ride a race very fairly for a gentleman, and, above all, to know at what degree of speed my own and other horses were going. The latter essential is only to be acquired by repeated practice, and many were the gallops I rode round and round the celebrated plains of Abraham—the death-scene of the immortal Wolfe—at day-break, when even in that sunny climate the air was cool, and there was dew upon the grateful turf.

A word concerning the trainer under whose fostering care I was thus so rapidly progressing, and whom I believe to have been as big a rogue as ever went unchanged. Cartouch had picked him up at Egham races, held on the historical soil of Runnymede, where a ragged, half-starved boy, with 'Newmarket' stamped indelibly on his precocious countenance, plucked him by the skirt, and begged piteously for one of three things, employment, a shilling, or some luncheon, for he was starving. Struck by the quaintness of the demand, Cartouch questioned the little applicant, and elicited from him, that he had run away from the head-quarters of racing for the very plausible reason that he could not get enough to eat; that he had no home, nowhere to go. 'Where are your parents?' was the next question. 'A'nt got none,' was the reply—'father's hanged.' 'Hanged!' said Cartouch, rather inconsiderately; 'what for?' 'For killing mother,' was the unhesi-

tating answer of the candid orphan. The upshot of it was, that Cartouch took him as a cab-boy, promoted him as he grew too big for that office to a groom ; and discovered one fine morning that he had walked off without a word of notice, but had taken none of his master's property with him, not even his own livery-clothes. Why he went away remained a mystery, nor was it ever satisfactorily explained ; but the next place the Colonel met him in was the Mauritius, where he was acting body-coachman to a highly respectable widow-lady. Here he expressed a desire to re-enter his former service, and was again placed in the Colonel's stable, where his knowledge of 'training,' picked up in early life, was turned to account. Since then, he had accompanied his master's horses wherever they went, and he was now *Mr.* Gamblin, a very important personage, and an immense card with all the junior officers of the 101st. I believe he had no Christian name. Such was the worthy who formed the third in a highly important conclave, carried on in a roomy stable in the immediate vicinity of the Plains of Abraham.

It was just six o'clock on a sweltering summer's morning, a few days before the Quebec races—no uninteresting meeting, and one to which the sportsmen of the States were not likely to send their worst horses—'not if they knew it.' Early as was the hour, we had been long stirring, and were thinking of breakfast. I had just dismounted, after riding a

gallop on Kitty Clare, the favourite for a great stake to come off next week—'officers up,'—and Colonel Cartouch, his trainer, and myself were in earnest discussion as to the probability of success.

'Is Squire Sauley comin'?' demanded the anxious trainer. 'I see him at Buffaler, and he told me he should enter Fancy Jack for the Colony Plate. If he comes, Colonel, and Fancy Jack starts, we shall have a tough job to pull through. I can't get the Squire's length, Colonel; and what's more, I don't think any man can—they're deep 'uns are these Yankees.'

'Fancy Jack's a smart horse,' said the Colonel, 'but the grey mare beat him last fall at Toronto, and Kitty Clare gave *her* three pounds and a beating at Montreal; besides, Mr. Grand can ride twenty to one better than Major Muffes who piloted her that time. It *must* come off, Gamblin. Don't you think so?' added the Colonel, appealing to me.

I certainly had great confidence in Kitty Clare; I had ridden her several times in matches, &c., and had always won with as little as possible to spare, so that she was not esteemed by any means as good an animal as she deserved to be. This was not so difficult a matter as many might suppose; for with all her speed and courage, she was gentle and tractable to a degree, and had a mouth sensitive as the finest instrument, which even the black jockeys she sometimes carried were not able to spoil. Many a rouleau,

to say nothing of dollars, had she put into my pocket, as well as her owner's; and now they were betting three to one against her in consideration of Fancy Jack's performances; and we anticipated, indeed, a golden victory. As we cantered our hacks back to the citadel, deep and earnest was our consultation as to the best means of ascertaining Fancy Jack's capabilities; and the Colonel, with all his experience, confessed himself to be at fault. 'I can make nothing of this fellow, Sauley,' said he; 'and I confess he is beyond my flight altogether. I know him well, and have been down to stay with him in his racing establishment at Baltimore. He has sixty or seventy horses in training, and only black fellows to look after them, superintending the whole thing himself. I was there for ten days, and he appeared to me to be drunk the whole time; but had I tried to get the better of him, I have no doubt I should have found out my mistake. The way he cleaned out a southerner, a fine young Carolinian, who made a series of matches with him, was, as the Squire himself would have said, 'a caution;' and Colonel Dodge, who boasts himself 'a 'cute old 'coon from Mississippi,' acknowledges that he cannot hold a candle to Sauley. However, the old robber is by way of being a gentleman, and we must ask him to mess, if he does come; and I think, Grand, you will be amused with a real Yankee character. As for Fancy Jack, I am convinced my mare can beat him if she

gets fair play ; and on our own course, with officers to ride, I think it will be hard if we cannot manage that. I shall not hedge a farthing.' 'No more shall I, Colonel,' said I ; and with this doughty resolution, we separated to dress for the usual morning parade.

The eventful week arrived, and with it came Squire Sauley, much to Mr. Gamblin's disgust. He brought with him several capital horses, and amongst others the renowned Fancy Jack ; but it struck me that for a gentleman making a tour of some five or six weeks from his own home, his luggage was sparing and simple beyond anything I had conceived possible. One tiny valise of shining black leather, which he carried in his hand, contained the whole necessary wardrobe of this modern Diogenes—although, unlike that amiable heathen, no one could accuse Mr. Sauley of living entirely in his tub. I had not then travelled in the United States, and was little aware of the many crafty inventions, such as 'collars,' 'boosoms,' as they call them, and other trifles, which, with that locomotive nation, supersede the necessity of carrying about a large quantity of clean linen. The Colonel and myself received our distinguished guest on his disembarkation from the steamer, and pressed on him our hospitable offers of board and lodging, as arm-in-arm we toiled up the steep ascent of the lower town—the Squire retaining his luggage, which no entreaty would induce him to part with. The day was hot, and my new acquaint-

ance, as he expressed it, 'a thirsty crittur,' so each hotel we passed on our pilgrimage called forth the same observation, 'I guess I shall go in and paint.' Three times we 'painted' accordingly, and after two 'sherry-cobblers' and a 'mint-julep,' the Squire became extremely communicative. We talked of his country and the 'Britishers,' and the States army, and the 'Brady Guards,' a distinguished volunteer corps; and I was severely catechized as to my own home and family, and whether Haverley Hall was a 'considerable clearin';' but not one word was dropped, although I watched for it eagerly as a cat for a mouse, concerning the all-important topic of Fancy Jack and the coming races. No, deep as a draw-well was the Yankee, and he had 'a pretty loud notion 'twas not *in* the Britishers to tree *him*, not nohow *they* could fix it;' and this idea seemed to have taken such entire possession of his mind, that all subjects connected with racing were as studiously banished from his conversation as though he had been a dissenting parson, instead of what we should call in England a 'Leviathan of the turf.' We had a large party that day to dinner; but I made it my own especial study to take care of Squire Sauley, thinking, in the verdancy of my youth, that under the influence of good cheer and agreeable conversation, I might be able to get something out of him. He was evidently unused to a mess-table, but, like all our brethren 'over the water,' he soon ac-

commodated himself to such customs and usages as were new to him, more especially that of drinking wine with each other in social good-fellowship—a ceremony which he found so much to his taste as to continue it after the cloth was drawn and the claret going its rounds—thereby pledging his new friends more repeatedly than is our custom in ‘the old country.’

I have said the Squire’s requirements in the ways of ‘purple and fine linen’ were of the most moderate kind, and his ideas upon the necessity of ablution seemed to be formed upon the same simple and inartificial plan. The wine had for some time been going its rounds, and grateful was the high-flavoured vintage of Bordeaux after a day on which the thermometer had stood no lower than eighty in the shade. Captain Jessamy, who always got more and more amiable and gentleman-like as the decanters waned, was expressing to Sauley his admiration of the latter’s country, his pleasure in travelling through its noble scenery, and his approbation of its excellent and moderate hotels—the only drawback to which was the very scanty allowance of the limpid element, in the smallest of basons and ewers; ‘so small, sir,’ lisped ‘Lavender Jem,’ as we called him, ‘that for three days, Mr. Sauley, I give you my honour, I was obliged to content myself with washing my face and hands, and nothing more.’ ‘Nothin’ more!’ hiccupped the Squire; ‘waal! mister, you air particular.

Look at me, mister ; my name's Sauley ! I a'n't a nigger, I ain't—for fifty-seven years this child ha'n't washed, 'ceptin face and hands on Sabbath, and often not that ! G'long hoss !' concluded our informant, with roars of laughter at Jessamy's countenance pending this candid and not over clean confession.

The fun was by this time getting fast and furious, and obeying a telegraphic signal from Cartouch, I slipped out of the mess-room, leaving my Yankee friend the centre of a listening and admiring throng of his entertainers. How pure, how beautiful was the midnight sky, its myriads of stars glittering with a radiance unknown in our duller and thicker atmosphere ! how heavenly was the mellow lustre of the moon, bathing in floods of beauty the silver bosom of the broad St. Lawrence, and deepening into blackness the shade of its wooded banks—as I looked down from the Queen's Bastion on one of the fairest scenes America can produce. Instinctively, as we lit our cigars, the Colonel and I paced leisurely past the sentries to that favourite spot, and as we leaned upon a gun in uninterrupted enjoyment of the sweet summer night, enhanced by contrast with the noisy scene of dissipation we had just quitted, I remarked on my companion's countenance a softened expression of melancholy which I had only once before seen to settle on those chiselled features, and I knew that his spirit was with the

days that were gone by. Yet lively and pointed as usual was his conversation, and in a few words he informed me that he had reason to suppose, from what his Spanish servant told him, that there was collusion between Gamblin and Sauley's trainer, and that he strongly suspected it was their intention to try their respective masters' horses the following morning, and make their own arrangements upon the result. It was accordingly agreed that we should be on the Plains of Abraham by daybreak, and, concealing ourselves somewhere in the neighbourhood of the course, by means of a pair of good glasses we should discover whether Mr. Gamblin was or was not to be depended on. Pursuant to this arrangement, the earliest streaks of dawn saw Cartouch and myself artistically clothed in the least conspicuous costume, creeping cautiously along a high thick hedge that skirts the race-ground, known to many an exhausted jockey as 'the Marchmont Fence,' and presenting the rather unusual spectacle of two gentlemen 'touting' their own horse. With the skill of a practised deer-stalker, my companion took up a position behind an impervious thicket, and drawing a pair of double-barrelled glasses from his pocket, carefully adjusted them for the discovery. We had not waited long, ere through the early grey of morning we made out four figures upon the plain busily engaged in stripping two horses, one of which even in that light we had no difficulty in recognising as

Colonel Cartouch's Kitty Clare—and the other, a grey, was doubtless Fancy Jack. Small time was wasted in preliminaries; a couple of dwarfs were hoisted into their saddles, and away they went—making running through the dubious twilight with the utmost confidence. The first round brought them within ten yards of our covert, and their identity was placed beyond a doubt,—Fancy Jack leading and our mare well up. The important race was to be twice round, about two miles, and it appeared that the same distance had been selected for the trial. The second time they neared us, an alteration was visible in the order of their running; the horses were abreast, but Fancy Jack was still pulling hard, whilst Kitty Clare was striding away in her usual easy-going fashion, but having apparently nothing to spare in order to keep pace with her antagonist. Up went our glasses to see the finish; the pace increased with startling velocity; the little jockeys, one a black fellow, set to with a will, and gamely their steeds answered to the call. Fancy Jack came with a rush, but our gallant mare kept her place at his quarters. Short the distance to the wished-for goal, but the grey horse had evidently shot his bolt, he changed his leg, the mare drew gradually but steadily upon him, and three more strides landed Kitty Clare a winner by a length!

In a short and hurried consultation, we agreed to make a considerable *detour* on our way back to the

citadel, that our presence at this important contest might not be discovered. It was evident our animal was the best; we feared nothing else in the race now that Fancy Jack was disposed of, and we agreed that if we could only discover the weights to be correct, we would back Kitty Clare for all the money we could get on before the result of the trial was made public. 'Pedro will find that out for us: I can trust the fellow with anything: and by Jove, Grand, if it only comes off, we shall walk into these Yankees 'pretty considerable handsome, I estimate,' said the Colonel, aptly mimicking Mr. Sauley's very peculiar tone and pronunciation.

From that day till the race came off, I lost no opportunity of backing the mare I was to ride. It was obvious that Squire Sauley did not fancy his horse with the fanciful name, as no consideration would induce him to invest a dollar upon the grey. This convinced me more and more that he was aware of the result of the trial which had taken place with his connivance. I gathered fresh confidence, and like Cartouch, backed Kitty Clare to win me a small fortune, particularly with one greedy individual, a shabby American from St. Louis, whose capital appeared inexhaustible, and who, it never occurred to me, might be making any number of bets on commission for another.

The first day's racing, with its successes, its failures, its heat, its noise, its flirtations, lotteries, luncheons,

and sherry-cobblers, must be passed over. Captain Tims was there, having journeyed from Montreal to be present; likewise Mrs. Tims and constant Spooner, ever at the fair Julia's side. But alas! Spooner was not seen to such advantage here as on 'the ocean wave.' In an evil hour he had allowed himself to be inveigled into riding the Wild Hawk for a hurdle-race, (hurdles four feet and a-half high, warranted not to bend or break!) with which the diversions of the meeting were to close. Equitation was not poor Spooner's forte, and under the solemn conviction that he should not survive the morrow's exploit, he was nervous, absent, and dispirited, or, as Mrs. Tims remarked, 'a greater gaby than ever!' At last the saddling-bell rings, the stewards call for Mr. Grand, who is ready, dressed, and weighed, exact to a pound—for this have I been walking miles, wrapped in clothing under a scorching sun—for this have I abstained from Saguenay salmon, and canvass-back duck, and passed untasted the amber 'Hodson's Pale,' the ruddy 'Carbonell's '25;' and this is my reward—the moment has come. Accompanied by Cartouch I walk up the course, the cynosure of a thousand eyes, and indubitably a hero to my own company, the privates of which back 'little Grand'—through thick and thin. Kitty Clare looks perfection, and as I am lifted on her shapely back, and pass my hand in fond caress down her arching crest, the skin is soft and smooth as satin, the muscle hard

and tough as steel. 'Fit to run for ten men's lives,' says the Colonel, as he walks alongside with his hand on my knee, for a few more last words. 'Never mind the others; wait upon Fancy Jack, and come at the finish,—you remember?'

I nodded intelligence, and took my place in the snorting, impatient rank. There were five others to start, but small notice did I take of any one but Squire Sauley's, whose colours I now saw close to me, worn by a man with whom I was not acquainted, an officer of a militia corps, but of whom I had heard as a practised and skilful jockey. From him I glanced over his horse, and for an instant a horrible suspicion darted across me that this was a bigger animal than the one I had seen from my ambush on the morning of the trial. Psha! it was impossible; Sauley could not have two Fancy Jacks, and it must have been the difference of light that puzzled me on the only two occasions I had seen the horse stripped. But we are for an instant in line, and at that instant the flag drops, and we are off! One hundred yards always steadied Kitty Clare, and as she settled down to her stride, I was able to make a pretty good inspection of my accompanying flight. Ere we were half-way round, it was evident to me that the others, with the exception of the grey, were running themselves out. On him I waited, and the first time past the stand, much to the astonishment of the ladies, the two favourites were far behind the field. The

next half mile brought them back to us, and now the race began. One by one they faded away and dropped off into our rear, as Fancy Jack began to force the running, and I let my mare out to live with him—faster and faster round the turn we come, Kitty shaving the posts and economizing every yard of ground. I get a pull at her head without losing my place, close upon his quarters as we enter upon ‘the straight run in,’ and as the distance post glances by, I sit down to make my rush. My antagonist is likewise ‘setting to,’ and it will evidently be a close race: the roar of the multitude falls like a dull, dead sound upon my ear, my eye is on the grey, and everything seems whirling by us, while we alone are stationary. Whip and spur are at work, and Kitty Clare runs as honest as the day, but it will not do, I feel the stride slackening,—the struggle subsiding,—the mare is beat! and with a thrill of disappointment I pull her up, not without difficulty, conscious that Fancy Jack has *done* me by a short half-length.

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Nothing for it but to ‘pay and look pleasant,’—such are the uncertainties of a pursuit on which men spend their lives and fortunes. I was dreadfully annoyed on Cartouch’s account as well as my own. In vain the latter, with his usual recklessness, strove to console me by his assurances that nothing could have been better than my jockeyship—that no power on earth could have saved the race as it was run—

that the trial we had witnessed had evidently been 'a got up thing' to deceive us. I was dispirited to a degree, and could not bring myself to take any interest in the concluding sports of the meeting, the most amusing of which was poor Spooner's dreaded hurdle race, in which he distinguished himself by a series of eccentricities performed by 'the Wild Hawk,' who was not to be prevailed upon to face the first leap, and consequently had to be brought back to his stable, guiltless of any active share in the contest; which was eventually carried off by an adventurous Yankee, who having, as he declared, a 'nervous' horse, gave the animal half-a-bottle of port wine in a sponge, and drinking the other half himself, came in a triumphant winner. But even this failed to amuse me. I was very sore at having been overreached so completely by the Yankee Squire; nor was there much consolation in the conviction at which, on putting together all we knew, Cartouch and I arrived—viz., that Sauley having two grey horses much resembling one another, had encouraged both 'the trial' and our discovery thereof, had thrown dust in our eyes by running his inferior horse, and declining to back the actual flyer in person, whilst he took everything he could get upon him 'by commission,' had finally brought out the real 'Fancy Jack' to carry off the stakes, the bets, and the honour and glory of 'getting pretty considerably to windward of the Britishers.'

CHAPTER III.

THE CHARMS OF THE COLONIES.

‘WHEN the heart of a man is oppressed with care,’ sings the time-honoured muse of *The Beggar’s Opera*, to the effect that there is no period when the male heart is so susceptible to woman’s charms as when suffering from disappointment, no matter from whence it arises. It was natural, then, that in my depressed state of feelings, I should turn for consolation to those dark eyes that had been watching my endeavours, and that would have sparkled—oh! how brightly—at my success. Charming Zoë de Grand-Martigny! sweetest of the transplanted daughters of sunny France, flourishing in a clime whose summer is even more glowing than thine ancestors’ own, what a bright specimen wert thou of Canadian loveliness, no mean type of the sex! I see her now, with her long glossy raven hair; her tall, undulating form; her clear, sallow complexion; and above all, those large liquid, dreamy black eyes, that might have driven many a wiser ensign than myself out of his senses. Right and left had those orbs done execution amongst the too susceptible ranks of the British army, but no one could boast,

at least with any justice—for verily upon this subject man is fearfully given to lying—but no one could justly boast of having made any impression on Zoë de Grand-Martigny. Was it my fault that, like other moths, I was attracted by the light, and fluttered round it, playing at sentiment till I burnt my own fingers? or could I help the foreign Zoë taking a pleasure in what she called my English *brusquerie*, and preferring my society to that of all her other dangles, probably for the very simple reason that I was less devoted to her than the rest? ‘If you would have a woman love you,’ said Zoë, many a year afterwards, when, like the butterfly that has been handled, the gloss and freshness were worn off our feelings never to return, ‘if you would have a woman really devoted to you, beware of letting her discover that you reciprocate the whole of her affection. Anxiety and uncertainty will enhance in her eyes the value of the treasure which she is not quite certain she possesses.’ This may be true, like many other uncomfortable doctrines, but it would have been better and wiser had we never been on terms to speculate in this manner on man’s weakness, or discuss subjects fraught with so much danger in such company.

In the meantime, we were young, merry, and thoughtless, and never was I more aware of Cartouch’s consideration, and more grateful to him for his kindness, than when he granted me an unso-

licit fortnight's leave after our mismanaged race, to feast my eyes on the glories and wonders of Niagara, and as fate willed it, in the company of the Grand-Martignys, who were to spend their usual autumnal month at that miracle of nature, and sooth to say, as the advertisements would have it, 'that resort of fashion.' Beautiful as is every turn in the winding length of the gigantic St. Lawrence, whose waters bore us, independent of railway and corduroy-road, the whole seven hundred miles of our expedition, in no portion of his course is his scenery so striking, so uncommon, so completely fairy-like, as where he spreads into what is appropriately called 'the lake of the thousand islands.' As we steamed along that broad unruffled surface, glistening like burnished gold in the setting sun, and studded with islands of every size and shape, from the undulating mass, whose rocks and woods, stretching away into the distance, made us fancy we were coasting the real bank of the river, down to the tiny islet, reflecting on its wavering mirror the single fir-tree for whose solitary growth alone it could find room; as we glided on through this region of enchantment, and paced the deck by our two selves in the drowsy air of the summer evening, no wonder that Zoë and I both felt the influence of the hour, and that in tones lowering more and more as we trenched further upon the dangerous ground of sentiment and romance, we breathed forth whispers that had far

better have been left unsaid, and gave way to feelings that should rise again like ghosts of the past to embitter with their shadowy mockery the uncared for 'days to come.' De Grand-Martigny was below with his three other daughters, alas, all motherless, and never seemed to trouble himself as to what became of Zoë. Being the eldest—such an eldest! just eighteen,—she had the control and management of the family. Her father, an indolent, disappointed man, who looked as if his life had been spent in struggles, one after the other, with fortune, till he was thoroughly weary of contention, and willing to float without effort down the stream, was in the habit of leaving everything to his eldest daughter, which gave her a confidence and self-reliance as far beyond her years as it was prejudicial to her interests. He, good man, enjoying his siesta in the cabin, never seemed to think that Zoë and the young soldier on deck might likewise be indulging in dreams, though not quite so harmless in their tendency, and the moon was up when we parted for the night, unacknowledged lovers, if truth must be told. Little had been spoken that could bear the construction of love-making, less, that could mean anything in the shape of a pledge; but there is a language that needs not the interpretation of the lip, and we felt that we understood one another.

Youth is not prone to analyze the feelings, and is proverbially careless of consequences, so that it can

secure the enjoyment of the hour. Even then I was conscious that my feelings towards Mlle. de Grand-Martigny were purely of a selfish nature; the thought of marrying her, or indeed of marrying at all, never for an instant crossed my mind. What! should I, Digby Grand, in the flower of youth and hope, with life and all its triumphs and enjoyments opening before me, delighting in my profession, and devoted far too much to the vanities of the world—should I, with my eyes open, hold my wrists out for the matrimonial fetters, and deliberately sacrifice my own liberty to give a lady hers? Forbid it, common sense! Miss Jones had given me a lesson—so in my ignorance I thought—as to the value of woman's love. Let poets prate about 'its priceless gem,' as they call it, if they will, I knew better the worth of the article, and firmly resolved that 'I could not do it for the money.' Still it was very pleasant living constantly with Zoë, finding her taking so deep an interest in all my doings, my likes and dislikes, my profession and my pleasures, watching her graceful form, and basking in the light of her glorious eyes; so day after day, regardless of what might come of it, looking not one hour beyond the present, I pursued my own selfish amusement and gratification, nor cared to anticipate the time when she, with all her earnest truthfulness, should find that she had anchored her hopes upon a dream, and I should discover that, according to the old proverb, certain

classes of persons, if they will meddle with edged tools, cannot always hope to escape scatheless.

Who can describe Niagara? From the loftiest harps that have hymned the praise of Nature, down to that unsophisticated follower of the muse who pays his artless tribute to her glories in those glowing stanzas, commencing—

Niagara! Niagara! you are indeed a staggerer!!!

—vide the album kept for inspection at the Falls,—that wonder of the world has indeed suffered enough at the hands of scribblers to ensure an immunity from the pen of an unlettered soldier, whose military career, commenced ere the Horse-Guards required from the astonished subaltern, before he is eligible to command a troop or company, a fund of information that would almost obtain a position of a Senior Wrangler. The calm Lake Erie, the whirling rapids, and the rush of the cataract, these are not to be embodied in sentences and syllables. When the painter's brush can realize the most gorgeous conceptions of the painter's intellect—when the poet is able to weave the brightest colours of his dream into a form of words that shall satisfy himself, nor leave aught wanting to the imagination unsatiated and insatiable, then may we hope to read a description worthy of the indescribable Niagara—but not till then.

‘What do you expect to see?’ said Major Hal-

berd to me before I started for the Fall—‘the sea tumbling down from the moon? If you anticipate anything short of this, you will not be disappointed!’ And truly I was not disappointed. But majestic as was this masterpiece of Nature in her sublimest mood, and deep as were my feelings of awe and admiration in contemplating this miracle of the waters in all its phases—in short, in doing Niagara, which takes at least a week,—there was room left in my heart for softer emotions than those of mere tributary worship, and as Moore sweetly sings,—

If woman can make the worst wilderness dear,

Think, think what a heaven she must make of Cashmere;

so may I confess that many a noontday ramble, and many a moonlight stroll beneath the roar of the cataract was rendered doubly picturesque and doubly delightful by the companionship of Zoë de Grand-Martigny. How is her memory interwoven with the scene—how vivid the impressions of all that we saw together—how dim and indistinct all that was not brightened by her presence. Hardly can I call to mind the crowded hotels, the disappearing dinners, at which the hungry guests came and went with the rapidity of the figures on a magic lantern—the well-dressed visitors from the States, a motley crowd, with their sallow, spare, long-haired intellectual looking men, who might be such a fine race, if they would only not gorge their food so rapidly, and trust their digestion so entirely to tobacco, and the pretty,

delicate, small-featured women, almost French in their faces and figures, and most unmistakably Parisian in their costumes—all these have I forgotten, or at least but indefinitely remember. Ay, even the usual expedition to Termination Rock, which it is necessary for every visitor to make who piques himself on his love of adventure, and which for the benefit of those sensible individuals who have not undertaken it, I can describe as being like getting *inside* an enormous wave with no very clear idea how to get out again. Even this peep behind the curtain of the Horse-shoe Fall is fading from my mind; but the moon-lit nights, the gleaming waters, and the sighing fir-trees, all of beauty in the sky and fragrance in the breeze, all these impressed with Zoë's gentle, mournful image, steal back upon a world-hardened heart, like gleams from some other, higher, purer, better state of existence.

And we parted in that fairy-land, parted as those who dare hardly hope to meet again. That mourning brow, that eager face, so wan as it looked its last farewell, how has it haunted me in the dark night-watches of many an after year—how have I been startled by that well-remembered countenance, thrusting itself upon me, with its calm, pleading expression, in many a scene of revelry and riot in the brilliant castle-hall, as on the solitary mountain-top, still grieving, still forgiving. The idol may be shattered in the dust, but the infatuation of the worshipper

shall outlive his faith. The lake of the thousand islands glittered again before me, but oh! how changed, as I steamed back to rejoin my regiment, and a lock of raven hair, a plain jet bracelet, that had encircled her dear wrist, were all that remained to me of Zoë de Grand-Martigny.

Other scenes were opening before me, almost another world, for no two seasons can present such a striking contrast—nothing can be so different as summer and winter in Lower Canada. Soon that mellow autumnal fortnight of fine weather, which is called ‘the Indian summer,’ glided by. It came, like the last red beams of the parting sun, to remind us of the glorious climate we had lost, and then the snow-flakes fell noiselessly, unceasingly, till the altered world was white with a covering from three to four feet deep over the plain. Then began the delights of sleigh-driving, and the winter gaities with which the Canadians while away that long and dreary season. Capital fun we had with our driving-clubs and *in-door* pic-nics, our snow-shoeing parties and ice-mountains, to say nothing of continual dinners and everlasting balls; but my ambition had been excited to hunt and slay the mighty elk in his native forests, extending as they do uninterruptedly from Labrador to within fifty miles of Quebec, and now that balls had lost their charm, I longed ardently to be off and taste the wild delights of a life in the woods with the Indian.

Oh! the hush of those primæval forests, where silence reigns supreme and unbroken, till the very noiselessness seems to smite upon the ear. No hum of insects, no song of birds, not even the sighing of the breeze, breaks the peaceful charm in those deep endless woodlands; and then the wildness of the idea that not a living soul besides your own party, not a hut or cabin, not an acre of cultivated land, exists within hundreds of miles; and that the very spot on which you stand has, in all probability, never before been trodden by mortal foot,—the magic scene on which you gaze has been hitherto veiled to mortal eye; for in these vast solitudes, there are many nooks and corners unknown even to the few Indians who lead their roving hunter's life by lake and forest; and then, over this world of novelty, the ice-queen throws her glittering mantle, with its pure and diamond-sprinkled folds,—the fir-tree, feathered to its stem, bends beneath its load of snow,—the cataract, caught in its leap, hangs suspended in an icy chain, forming column upon column of the brightest crystal, and the broad bosom of the lake spreads away in level beauty, without a spot to soil its glistening surface, save where the track of 'caribboo' or 'moose-deer,' sole denizens of these winter solitudes, betrays the course of our gigantic game, or the impression of his snow-shoe marks the pursuit of the untiring Indian.

A merry, joyful party were we, as we burrowed in

the snow, at our anticipated hunting-ground, a hundred miles and more from the out-lying log-house, of the very last 'habitant;' nor would we have exchanged our unsheltered bivouac, with its enormous fire, absolutely indispensable in such a climate, and not likely to get low where miles of forest were to be had for the cutting, our sea-biscuit and pease-soup, those most palatable of provisions, and the sparkling ice-cold water, to which health and hard work gave an unspeakable flavour—for turtle and tokay in the saloons of a palace.

Our party consisted of Cartouch, ever foremost in all exploits by flood and field, Dr. Squirt, the quaintest, jolliest 'medico' that ever handled lancet, and myself; whilst, for our retinue, we had obtained the services of an Indian chief, with an unpronounceable name; his son, a handsome stripling of some sixteen summers; a Huron, an Algonquin, and a half-bred Canadian, named 'Thomas,' jester, valet, interpreter, and cook in ordinary to the whole party. We could make ourselves understood by our Indian friends, in a sort of *patois* compounded of French, which they had picked up, and a few of their own words, which we had contrived to learn, but anything in the shape of an explanation invariably came to a stand-still, without the assistance of Thomas; and the contrast between his Gallic volubility and the grave imperturbable demeanour of 'the savages' was irresistible. Long and laborious was

our march up to the ground in which moose were expected to be plentiful, performed as it was upon snow-shoes—no seven-leagued boots, even to an experienced practitioner,—and dragging with us on long narrow boards, called ‘treborgons,’ the few necessaries that ‘a life in the woods’ requires. A motley crew were we, starting every morning at sunrise from our last night’s dormitory, clad in red night-caps, flannel shirts, blanket coats and leggings, of all the colours of the rainbow, artfully-constructed mocassins, and craftily-worn snow-shoes, the Indians dragging after them the treborgons, which constituted our household furniture; the whites every man armed with his rifle over his shoulder, his axe, knife, and tin cup hanging to his belt, and his blanket—a great-coat by day, a couch and coverlet by night—strapped securely to his back; the chief himself in advance, directing our course, and appearing to find his way through that labyrinth of woods by some intuitive knowledge, some instinct of locality, possessed only by the Indian.

Thus we journeyed on, from sunrise till towards the close of the afternoon, when approaching dusk warned us to look out for some suitable spot to form our *cabane*, as the hole was called in which we passed the night. A good spring of water was the primary object, and that found, we set to with a will, and with one or two shovels and all the available snow-shoes, we soon scooped out a large oblong hole, a

sort of grave, capable of containing eight persons, taking care to get quite down to the surface of the earth. Oh! the disappointment when, as would sometimes happen, that surface proved to be marshy and unsound: another place must be selected, and the whole labour begun again. This accomplished, a large fire was kindled in the centre of our 'cabane,' dividing it into two compartments, and Squirt duly attending to the commissariat, 'the pot was put on to boil.' Meantime, one was busied in felling trees, for an ample store of fuel; another, in cutting young and tender fir-branches, to form couches for the weary travellers; another, in fetching a copious supply of fresh spring water; Thomas and the Doctor were getting on with the supper, and by the time it was cooked, the fire had blazed up into a species of furnace, whose effect was soon visible on the walls of our habitation, crystallizing the snow into every sort of fantastic shape, our fir-branches were dry, our blankets spread, our appetites whetted sharply as our knives, and we were completely settled in our temporary home.

Hunger is the best sauce, and we enjoyed our simple repast, with a zest unknown to aldermen and common-council dignitaries. Then the delight of a sedative pipe, and the quiet drowsy conversation that preceded an early turn-in, good night, and a roll in our blankets, were the substitutes for wine-and-water, wax candles, and dressing-rooms: and deep

was the repose that followed, unbroken save by an occasional shiver when the fire got low, and the cold forced some awakened sleeper unwillingly to rise, and throw fresh logs upon the flame. Such was often my case, and, as I gazed upwards at the branches of the forest twining above my head, and standing out in the glare of the fire-light, and through them at the open sky beyond, glittering with its myriads of stars, I rejoiced in the wild freedom of a hunter's life—and a thrill of delight came over me, that convinced me how little removed in his inner nature is the polished denizen of civilization, from the wild savage who roams houseless o'er the forest or the plain.

Behold us at length arrived where the giant-elk are plentiful, and settled in a home of the same description as our temporary resting-places, but, as being a more permanent abode, much improved in its interior arrangements and outward decorations. Here we have screens of fir-branches erected to create a draught that shall carry off the smoke from the wood-fire, so trying to the eyes and irritating to the lungs: *lacrimoso non sine fumo*, sings Horace, in his description of an uncomfortable halting-place; and truly the Epicurean bard, who knew so well how to take care of Number One, must have suffered severely from this annoyance, with his inflamed eyelids and luxurious temperament. But cleared of *boucane*, as the Canadian calls it, and embellished with sundry little fittings-up from the creative axe of

the Indian, our hunting *cabane* was a perfect palace by comparison; and as we smoked our pipes round the enormous fire on the first night of our arrival, we laid our plans for the morrow, with all that anticipative delight which gives their greatest zest to the sports of the field. Two Indians had been sent forward by forced marches to reconnoitre the ground, and ascertain the locality of the moose, and as they dropped in separately with their reports, Cartouch, who took the management of the party, arranged for us our next day's beat. 'The Algonquin has tracked a good herd nearly to the lake, about two leagues from here,' said he; 'Squirt and I, with the double-barrelled rifles, might, I think, manage the whole of them; but the Huron is full of an enormous male; whose ravage (the place trodden and bruised where the animal has been browsing) he has discovered on the hill beyond what he calls the Rivière Blanc; only he thinks he disturbed him, for his footmarks are away down the river pointing for the Batiscon. It will be a devilish long stalk, Grand; but you are the lightest weight, a great pull on snow-shoes, and the keenest,' he added, with a half-melancholy smile; 'so perhaps you would like to give an account of this out-and-outer.'

I jumped, of course, at the idea; and it was accordingly arranged that I should be off by day-break the following morning, under the auspices of the chief himself—that veteran having taken a great

fancy to his young *protegé*, and being extremely anxious that I should have a successful *chasse* for my *début*. I could hardly sleep for thinking of my first shot at an elk ; and as Cartouch said, when I awoke him for the third time as I fidgetted from under my blanket to see if daylight would *ever* come — ‘ You are so very uncomfortable, Grand, one would suppose you were going to be married instead of being safe in the woods.’

Dawn arrived at last, as it always does, if you only wait for it ; and the first streaks had hardly ‘ dappled into day,’ before the Indian chief and I were striding up the wooded hill that overhung our *cabane* ; the savage, as usual, leading, and his follower husbanding his strength for the work that he knew was in store. A little Indian dog, who rejoiced in the name of Toko, was our only companion, and with the sagacity of his race, persisted in walking so closely upon my tracks as to catch the heels of my snow-shoes, and threaten to throw me down at every step. On we toiled, silent as the grave, over the top of the hill, down into a ravine, across a lake, up another mountain whose crest had been for some time frowning over us, and ere this the sun was up in the heavens, and throwing his glorious light over the scenery of a dream. Never did I see such a view as burst upon me when I gained the summit of that laborious ascent. Far as the eye could reach, an expanse of hill and dale, mountain, lake, and

river, all glittering in the morning beams, as though sprinkled with an infinity of diamonds: woods, feathered with their snow-coverings in every sort of fantastic shape, clothed the land: a broad, unsullied garment of driven snow wrapped the frozen waters. Far before me, cleaving the deep blue sky, rose the clear white peak of the hills beyond the Batiscon—one of the few rivers in these solitudes that can boast of a name, and which forms a kind of landmark to the Indians. It was a vision of enchantment—a peep into fairy-land; and made me doubt whether nature might not be more beautiful in these wintry robes of state, than when clothed with all the luxuriant verdure of ‘leafy June.’

What a curious thing is the association of ideas. I began to think of Zoë, and the bracelet, and the lock of hair, when I was startled from my reverie by the abrupt halt of the chief, who, wheeling rapidly round, confronted me with a startling look of almost fierce triumph. Not a word had he said, good or bad, since we started—not once had he condescended to look back and ascertain how his panting white friend was getting on; but now he marked my gaze wandering over the panorama spread out before me; he felt my admiration, and was flattered by it, and drawing up his spare sinewy frame to its loftiest proportions, he waved his outstretched arm towards the four points of the compass, then smiting his expanded chest, and stamping with his foot once upon the

snow, while his eye kindled, and his nostril dilated like that of some roused thorough-bred horse, he exclaimed, with a dark flush of pride I shall never forget, *C'est ma chasse!*—then turning rapidly away, dived like a hound stooping to the scent, into a tangled ravine, where first began to appear signs of the presence of our game.

Enormous footmarks, as though some cloven-footed elephant had been trampling the snow; branches bent and broken, tender saplings gnawed and bruised, disclosed the ravage of the moose; but he had been alarmed the previous day, and he was off. Like a very bloodhound, the wily Indian slotted him through the perfect labyrinth of his footmarks, as he had strayed hither and thither over his feeding-ground before he was disturbed, till even as a skein is unravelled, he hit upon the true course by which the scared giant had made away. Once, and once only, the shrill war-cry of his tribe rang from his lips, and bending with redoubled ardour to the task, he strode on in pursuit at a pace which gave me but little breath for the 'tally-ho!' with which I astonished those venerable woods. On and on we went; the chase had commenced in right earnest, and a keen excited Indian on snow-shoes takes a deal of catching. I was young, I was light, and above all my blood was up, as that mysterious fluid will rise at nineteen only, and I held my own as best I might. Small leisure had I for the wonders

through which we passed ; boughs discharged their frozen shower in my face, concealed roots caught the toes of my snow-shoes, and over I went—arms instinctively thrust forward to save, struck shoulder-deep into the treacherous surface, and my face buried itself in the blinding snow. Up and at it again. The Indian is forward, and the elk is before the Indian—this is what I have dreamt of for months. An Englishman must never say die : and panting, weary, and dishevelled, I toil on in the footsteps of the hurrying chief down another hill, and on to the firmer surface of the Rivière Blanc. Here the wind sweeping up the course of the stream has cleared it of snow for many a long mile ; and taking off our snow-shoes, to our unspeakable relief, we follow the scarcely visible foot-marks at an increased pace. There is little time to spare, but at a winding of the river my steps are forcibly arrested by a scene of startling magnificence. A bluff, perpendicular crag rears its broad front before me, adorned like the façade of some magic palace, with long glittering columns of the clearest crystal. The volume of a cataract leaping from its brow has been arrested in mid-air, as though by some icy charm ; and there it hangs spell-bound, the gigantic icicles forming each a natural shaft, that art might strive to imitate in vain.

But short the pause of wonder and delight, for the chief is still before me, and the sun is high in the

cloudless heavens. I am getting really beat, and a half-suspicion crosses my mind that it is possible we may lose our quarry after all. Hark ! infusing new life into my veins, the Indian's war-cry strikes once more upon my ear, and Toko, with bristles erect and eyes flashing, bounds to the front. The tracks of the moose have turned off the wind-swept river into the deep snow, and now we shall have him—another twenty minutes must see us run into him, enjoying as we do, the advantage of snow-shoes, whilst every stride he makes buries his long legs up to the knee. The chief stops to help me on with these auxiliaries, and again we plunge into the sombre forest. Ha ! there is blood on the snow—our game is distressed—poor beast ! he cools his thirsting lips, and cuts his sensitive muzzle in the frozen element as he labours on ; the pace and the distance are beginning to tell ; it cannot last much longer, and now I hear faithful Toko baying furiously ahead. Who talks of fatigue ? With a rush I come up alongside of the quiet, wary Indian, and passing him recklessly, push forward in the direction of the sound. Where the trees and underwood grow most impervious, I catch a glimpse of a huge dark object swaying up and down through the tangled branches ; at last I am face to face with an elk in its native forest. As I approach him, I become aware of his enormous, and, sooth to say, ungainly proportions, and rapt in astonishment, I gaze on him, hardly thinking of destruction, till the

chief coming up, puts my rifle into my hand and warns me not to approach too closely. '*Il est malin, le sacré original,*' says he, in his mongrel language, *original* being Indian for elk, and I can see by his red, lowering eye that the unceasing attentions of Toko have raised his ire to the utmost. Often he strikes out at the dog with his long fore-legs, but he is too much blown and exhausted to reach the little aggressor, who remains at a cautious distance.

The caps are not quite firm on the nipples of my rifle, and as I press them carefully down, I keep advancing to within a few feet of the infuriated animal. All this time he has been regaining his wind, and with a desperate rush he makes for me, as his most tangible enemy. Luckily the snow is deep, and a friendly tree is near: the next bound would have brought him upon me, but I step aside, behind the sheltering trunk, and as he passes within three feet of me, I let drive at him with both barrels: the bullets crash through his heart, and he rolls over on the snow, never to rise again. Game to the last, he dies rearing his head into the air, whilst his frame is stretched quivering in the death-struggle, and strange concord! an English who-whoop rings mingled with an Indian war-cry through those Canadian solitudes. From hoof to shoulder the giant measures an honest seven feet, and proportionate to his bulk are my triumph and delight.

Never shall I follow the moose through those

glorious solitudes again—never more shall I associate with the true, unpolluted, and noble-spirited Indian, savage though he be, the man of unstained faith and indomitable energy, the eagle eye, the ready hand, and the undaunted heart. But often in the trammels which accompany the comforts and luxuries of civilization, doth my spirit long for the hush of the uninhabited forest, for the wild fresh breeze of the trackless prairies, and fain would I re-enter once again the red man's lodge, fain live once more the free inartificial life of the Children of the Woods.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GUARDS.

OF all sorts of soldiering, from the dashing light dragoon to the scientific sapper and miner—from the staid and steady infantry-man to the 'flying bombardier,' as our distinguished horse-artillery are somewhat irreverently nick-named by their brethren of the sword,—of all these accomplished practitioners in the science of manslaughter, commend me to the Guards. Their discipline, though yielding to none in the exactitude with which it is carried out, weighs more lightly on officer and soldier than that of any other corps; their services it is unnecessary to mention, as it is well known that wherever glory is to be gained, wherever hard knocks are to be taken, and distinction to be won, the privilege of the Guards has ever been to woo honour in the thick of it. Their officers are perfect gentlemen, and thorough *bons camarades*; their stalwart privates are smart and steady in the field, as, considering the temptations of London, they are well-conducted in barracks; and their non-commissioned officers, that vital third estate in the well-being of a regiment, are beyond all

praise. When we combine with these essentials the advantages of being quartered in the metropolis of the world, in the very centre of civilization and refinement, we cannot wonder that a commission in the Guards is the grand desideratum to a young man wishing to enter life and the service through the same portal—is an object of emulation (not envy) to his brother warriors in the rest of the British army.

But there are two sides to every question. Even a sovereign, unless it be one of those skilful deceptions with which unprincipled jokers toss for the score of a Greenwich dinner—even a sovereign has its reverse; and great as are the advantages of a London life—manifold as are the benefits of what is emphatically called ‘good society;’ yet, on the other hand, pleasure in the metropolis assumes her most alluring garb. Youth is seldom skilled in resistance to temptation. Money melts like snow before the sunbeam; debts accumulate like drifts in the storm; and we all know how soon a man involved becomes reckless—how soon recklessness merges in despair. Ambition, when restrained by principle, is a fine thing—emulation, in all matters of usefulness, is a fine thing. To the constant upward tendency of mankind, we owe the multiplying discoveries of science, the increasing prosperity of a nation. But all this may be carried too far. And who that watches with impartial eye the struggle going on around him—who that looks calmly on at his neighbour ‘caring too much

for these things,' will deny that society, in all its ranks, is irritated with the fevered desire of coping with that which is immediately above it—that the nobleman must imitate the sovereign, the gentry vie with the noble ; the tradesman and the farmer ape the gentry ; whilst the lower classes, divided by too wide a gulf to be able to compete with what they call 'well-to-do people,' would many of them fain pull down to their own level those ranks to whose superior station they cannot themselves hope to rise? Let the reformation begin at the top—let the better educated and more reflective be content to 'do their duty in that state of life in which Providence has placed them,' and we shall hear less of public ruin and private destitution—we shall be spared the anomaly of gentlemen by birth being compelled to support the exigencies of their 'false position' by actions which their chivalrous ancestors would have blushed to own—we shall be told no longer in the clubs, or on 'the Heath,' that the Hon. Mr. This is celebrated for his 'very sharp practice,' or the noble Lord That is a 'deuced ticklish fellow to deal with about money-matters.'

But no misgivings had I as I embarked triumphantly on the career before me, and walked down St. James's-street, in the pleasant consciousness that I was young, well-dressed, and possessed, for my age, of considerable knowledge of the world. Sir Peregrine for once had exerted himself—my wishes

were crowned, and I was an ensign and lieutenant in the Guards. Fair heads were bowed and taper fingers kissed to me as high-conditioned, good-actioned horses whirled landau, brougham, and barouche along the clattering stones; and I lifted my hat in return with unabashed coxcombray, for Lady Overbearing had voted me good-looking, and said I made a capital bow. Well-whiskered, portly *roués* nodded good-humouredly to me from the bay-window of White's and the murky morning-room at Crockford's; for it was allowed that 'young Grand was a nice gentlemanlike boy;' and that point being established, and his intention of ruining himself and family clearly ascertained, he might have committed all the crimes in the calendar, levanted, and robbed the mail, without suffering any diminution in the good opinion of these arbiters of their own world. Already had I been elected a member of Crockford's—already criticised the unpaid dinners, for which, on the principle of indirect taxation, the 'round room' up-stairs compensated so handsomely. Aye, and more than this, I was in the fair road to become one of the *élite* 'over the way.' Two kind friends—a yachting marquis and a dropsical dandy—had persuaded me to face the dread ordeal of 'the ballot;' and had offered their services as 'proposer and seconder,'—good offices that, by the way, I have known filled by those who were themselves the very first to blackball the unsuspecting novice.

‘Grand, why weren’t you at the Opera last night? Riolte was capital, and looking so pretty.’

‘Why, I dined with old St. Heliers to meet Grandison, as I was to go on guard with him to-day. What a nice fellow he seems!—but not so fast as his brother, who might be his father, to all appearance.’

‘Yes, Grandison is a fresh young-looking fellow of his age; but then he was campaigning when his elder brother was playing the devil; and sitting up all night, and every night, with claret, whist, hot suppers, large cigars, and continual hazard, takes it out of a fellow more than all the fighting in Alison’s ‘History’ or the Duke’s ‘Despatches.’ I dare say you had a cheery party there yesterday?’

‘Very. And my lord would not let me go, but kept me to play whist in what he calls his boudoir. I had a very good night, for there was a light-haired fellow there, whose name I did not catch, that was innocent of the game as a new-born babe; and he *would* play so high, that I won a cool hundred of him. St. Heliers wanted to have ‘lansquenet’ after that, but the room was so full of cigar-smoke, my unknown friend could not stand it, so I got home by three o’clock.’

‘Well, I wish I had had your luck. I swore I would not go to Crocky’s, so I dropped in upon that brute Meadows for some supper after the Opera, and lost three hundred. There was a fellow in some line

regiment there, who kept backing out, and won enormously. I think Meadows said his name was Levanter.'

'I know him,' said I, as a crowd of recollections came rushing upon me; and Hillingdon not caring to press the subject, the matter here dropped, and the conversation took some other turn. 'The relief is ready, sir,' said a tall soldier-like corporal, as, with military respect, he entered the small, dingy apartment at St. James's, in which the above discourse was carried on. And I may take the opportunity of Hillingdon's absence in the performance of his duty as lieutenant of the Queen's Guard, to describe the brother officers with whom I was associated in the pleasant task of keeping watch and ward at St. James's.

In the first place, then, to begin with the captain of the guard, who, it is hardly necessary to remark, holds the rank of a lieutenant-colonel in the army. The Hon. D'Arcy Grandison was the beau-ideal, the very type of a thorough guardsman. Of noble birth and aristocratic bearing, the colonel was as distinguished for his high, unsullied sense of honour in the world as for his daring gallantry in the field. Respected at the Horse Guards, he was yet beloved by the Ensigns, and many a young man owes his preservation from vice and ruin to Grandison's friendly admonitions and bright example. Heir to Lord St. Heliers—and verily it must have been a

strict entail that could preserve any reversion from that grasping *roué*—Grandison's portion as a younger child had received no addition from his spendthrift brother; and he had risen by his own exertions and military success to the position which he now held. He had made a love-match with a lady of his own rank, but of no larger fortune; yet, with an increasing family, everything seemed to prosper with him. It was a noble sight to see that fine soldier-like man, with his Waterloo medal on his breast, walk into the Colour-court, accompanied by his lovely wife, and two or three beautiful children, to hear the band of the regiment, of which she was as proud as the Colonel himself. The officers liked him, the men adored him; and if there was any person in the world for whom his selfish brother cared one snap of his fingers, I do believe it was D'Arcy. Such was the officer to whom I had been introduced the previous evening at Lord St. Heliers' table, and under whose command I carried the Queen's colours into the palace of St. James.

Hillingdon may be described in fewer words. A quiet, good-tempered, and gentleman-like man, with abilities far above the average order, and which might have won him fame, had his circumstances obliged him to cultivate them. As it was, he possessed an easy fortune, which he was doing his best to destroy. Another victim to the fascination of play, that appeared the only pursuit which could

prick him into excitement—the greatest of luxuries to an imperturbable disposition like poor Jack Hillingdon's. Alas! his eventual fate may be summed up in those few words that have told the career and the catastrophe of many a bright intellect and many a kindly heart—'He was a good fellow; but he was ruined by gambling.'

Of the others, D'Egville was young, conceited, and a beautiful dancer. Lord Maltby, unaffected, good-humoured, and a Yorkshire-man—bored with ladies, but very happy at mess—rather uncouth in his manners, but a capital judge of a horse, and a most undeniable bruiser.

Strictly as the discipline of the Guards is carried on in all matters of real importance, it is not to be supposed that so essential a department as the commissariat can be neglected, and an excellent dinner furnished at St. James's daily for those officers whose duty demands their presence there, is an economical substitute with her Majesty's Government for officers' barracks, allowances of coals, candles, &c., for all of which this very well-cooked repast is, by a pleasant fiction, supposed to be a complete equivalent. Eight o'clock strikes as two of the Blues come clinking up from the Horse Guards to join the mess. There is one vacant seat at the Colonel's disposal, and it is filled by a guest in plain clothes, of the mildest manners, and most unassuming deportment; and yet that quiet, old, grey-haired man is a major-

general, who led three forlorn-hopes in the Peninsula, and whose frame, scarred by sabre-cut and riddled by musket-shot, has withered beneath the burning sun of our Indian peninsula. I face the colonel, who takes the top of the table; and soon we are all engrossed in that lively and varied conversation so surely engendered by the good-fellowship of a mess. 'Grand! a glass of wine.' 'Maltby, have you been to Jem Burn's lately? They tell me he has got a black fellow that is to come out a wonder.' 'Hillingdon, do you like your box at the Opera, as well as the one we had last season?' 'How do you go to the Derby? Marygold can't win.' 'By-the-by, I saw a horse at Tattersall's yesterday that Maltby ought to buy.' 'Would he make a charger?' Such is the recitative going on amongst the younger portion of the company; whilst, at the upper end of the table, the older officers are engaged in lively discussion on the merits of a newly invented shell, and the general is describing, almost in a whisper, the particulars of an exploit from which he was taken away for dead, and for which he received 'the Bath.'

Pleasantly the evening wears on, till, after a very temperate symposium, (for we are on guard,) the hoof of Napoleon's favourite charger, Marengo, set in gold, and converted into a gorgeous snuff-box, makes its rounds. Ten o'clock strikes. The general departs; the officers betake themselves to their

respective guards; and Colonel Grandison, in cloak and bear-skin cap, proceeds to visit the different sentries.

Apollo does not always keep the bow strung to its utmost tension, nor are the clustering curls of the Guardsman—a crop farmed by Willis with such protective care—constantly concealed beneath the frowning terrors of his bear-skin cap. The routine of military duty is pleasantly varied by the smiles of beauty, and wheeling evolutions in the field are gladly exchanged for the mazy dance. Ay, the lamented hero of a hundred fights, the iron warrior of the age, was himself a ball-goer and a ball-giver; nor was a card for Apsley House the least coveted invitation amongst the gaities of the season. Such was 'the pasteboard' that greeted my eyes on a well-covered breakfast-table in my comfortable lodgings in Park-street, and for one of those magnificent *fêtes* I attired my person with the utmost care some few evenings afterwards. From the sombre inside of a box upon wheels, from the dusky street and the dirty crowd, the transformation was instantaneous to a blaze of light illumining the splendours of the warrior's palace. It was dazzling, but delightful; and I felt within me the butterfly nature that experiences a keen sense of pleasure from the mere contemplation of a mob of well-dressed, well-born men and beautiful women, met together avowedly for the purpose of appearing to the best advantage—always

premissing, that the butterfly himself is part and parcel of such a pageant. Reflection is not a matter of hours in a dark room with a dry volume. Self-communing may take place in a second of time, surrounded by all that can enchant the eye and excite the feelings. In the short interval that elapsed between leaving my carriage and entering the ball-room, during the putting on of one kid glove, and the translation of my unassuming name from mouth to mouth as 'Mr. Grand,' 'Mr. Brand,' 'Mr. Lang,' until ushered into the presence of our noble host, under the aristocratic title of 'Mr. Sam!'—in those few seconds I had time to say to myself, 'Digby, this is the life for you—this is the element in which you can really exist; for this be contented to sacrifice comfort, competence, friends, fortune, and self-respect.' I had not then applied the chemistry of experience to separate the metal from the alloy—the test of time to recognise the true from the counterfeit. I was satisfied to take things and people as they were, nor trouble myself about that period which, sooner or later, overtakes us all, when we are startled to discover that we have lavished the worship of a life-time upon idols—that we are lonely and helpless at our need—because, forsooth, 'our gods are clay.'

'What a pretty ball, my dear!' says fat Lady Trunnion to shaky Mrs. Marabout. 'How well dear Jane is looking—quite lovely, I declare. Has

she been dancing much?' How pleased she is to hear that Jane, who suffers from a lack of partners, poor girl! has not danced at all; so there is a better chance for Lady Trunnion's three, one of whom is pretty, and the other two, flirts. 'How d'ye do, Mr. Grand. Mary, Mr. Grand, my daughter! I think you know Selina?' But Mr. Grand, though a young bird, is not to be caught by chaff, and bows himself away without requesting the honour for the next dance, as was intended by artful mamma.

'Who is he?' whispers Mrs. Marabout to her next neighbour, chattering Lady Jay.

'Sir Peregrine Grand's son—the eldest, my dear. *Will* be enormously rich, I fancy. Goodish-looking; but has got into a wild set.'

'I know you are not weak enough to dance, Grand,' says Maltby, lounging up to me—'at least, not without a reason; so come with me. Mrs. Man-trap has asked to be introduced to you. A great compliment, by Jove! She is not much in my line; but I want to get away to go to Jem Burn's; so having performed one good action, I shall cut *my* stick with an easy conscience.' With these words, the good-natured peer brought me up to a particularly well-dressed lady, who, at the first glance, I could see was *crépéd*, 'flounced,' and 'got up,' in a manner which left no doubt of her aspirations after universal conquest. Notwithstanding a beautifully rounded figure—if it had a fault, some-

what too *embonpoint* for her height,—notwithstanding a merry blue eye, a saucy smile, a skin like alabaster, and a profusion of showery light hair, my first impression of Mrs. Man-trap was disappointment at those charms of which I had heard so much ; and I whispered to Maltby, as we approached, ‘Not half so handsome as I expected, but devilish well-dressed.’ Little did I suspect the fascination which she exercised over all that came within range of her artillery. How low, in my ignorance, did I estimate the power of the sorceress. But I was doomed, like many a wiser man, to fall down and worship where I came only to gaze and criticise. Gradually and insensibly the charm stole over me. Lights were glittering and fairy forms were flitting around ; beauty and perfume steeped my outward senses in enjoyment ; and the brazen *refrain* of some ‘waltz of Paradise’ wafted ecstasy to my soul : and so I stood as one entranced, leaning over the chair of that witch in muslin, and sustaining my part in a conversation that became every moment more dangerous. ‘She don’t care for him, the baby-bride!’ said Mrs. Man-trap, speaking of a young couple who then passed us. ‘Fresh from the nursery, and in all the first bloom of girlhood, depend upon it, she can spare no time from the world and its ‘engagements’ to waste upon her husband. She has not yet learnt *to feel*, poor child ! And if her mamma had told her to marry a bishop, she would have liked him just as well. A

woman must have suffered, Mr. Grand, before she can really love; and then if her attachment is fixed upon a boy—on one younger than herself, who is, day by day, making good his footing in that world which is gliding from *her*, she is deserving of pity indeed;’ and the blue eyes looked up into mine, with a soft, pleading expression that was irresistible, the saucy features changed for an instant, as a shadow of deep thought stole over her brow, investing her with that sorrowing, chastened beauty which the hand of Time reserves for those who are no longer in the early freshness of youth—rich amends for all the dimples and roses of laughing girlhood. What wonder that I forgot our acquaintanceship was but of three-quarters of an hour!—that I gave myself up to the delirious intoxication of my position! and shutting my eyes resolutely to all I had heard of the lady herself—a runaway match, a divorced husband, a brother shot in a duel, and a father who died of a broken heart—that I talked sentiment deep and devoted as her own; and vowed, in the despicable hypocrisy of my heart, that ‘the love of a silly girl was unworthy of a man.’ I spoke the last words in a somewhat louder tone than that in which our whispered conversation had previously been carried on, so much so as to cause a lady who was passing, to turn her head towards the impassioned speaker: with a thrill of shame and remorse amounting to agony I recognised the massive

black hair, the pale and care-worn features of Zoë de Grand-Martigny. Luckily, at that moment, I felt my arm touched by Colonel Grandison, who had come across the room to present me to his wife ; and in the confusion of an introduction, my emotion escaped notice. I resolved, however, to seek an interview with Zoë immediately, to ascertain why she was in England, and express to her my unaltered feelings ; for, strange to say, that gentle, sorrowing face exercised the same power over me here in the midst of London's noblest revel, as beneath the silent moon and cloudless sky that look calmly down upon the turmoil of Niagara.

From room to room I bowed, and glided and edged my way upon the fruitless search. I tore a countess's skirt, and trod upon a duke's toe. I passed Lady Overbearing, without the slightest token of recognition ; my heart was with Zoë on the Lake of the Thousand Islands, and I toiled on in vain. Could it have been a vision sent to warn me, or was it my Canadian love, thus assisting in the body at a London ball ? I had pictured her to myself many thousand miles away ; I had been haunted for months by that calm face, with the very same expression that it bore as she passed me a few minutes ago ; the same agonized look that had once seemed to bid me an eternal farewell ; and now she was in the room, in the house, and I could not find her ; it was heart-breaking—it was maddening. The lights

danced around me, the gaudy crowds swam before my eyes, while ever and anon a strain of music from the dancing-room arose fitfully, like the wail of a lost spirit, or the mocking laugh of a demon, and combined to drive me well nigh out of my senses. At length, in despair, I was compelled to seek the cooling atmosphere of the open street; and it was with a beating brain, and a sickness at my heart, that I staggered down those broad and stately steps which I had ascended so triumphantly but two hours before.

‘Are you for St. James’s-street, Grand?’ said Hillingdon’s well-known voice, as he put his arm within mine, and proffered the soothing refreshment of a cigar to my excited nerves.

‘Anywhere,’ said I, wildly—‘anywhere for excitement; Jem Burn’s, Crocky’s, Meadow’s, or the devil—it’s all the same to me.’

And so it was; all I wanted was to escape reflection, and another minute saw my companion and myself cooling our brows in a Hansom’s cab, hastening to the emporium of a retired prize-fighter, where we might see two redoubted champions of our species pommel one another to their heart’s content, and then ‘walk round and show themselves’ in all the unsavoury triumph of first-rate muscular condition.

‘Any orders, gen’lemen,’ said a dwarfish waiter of the dirtiest description, as, flourishing his dingy napkin, he dodged about a small square apartment, with

an area in the centre, on which, as on a stage, the science and tactics of the ring were being displayed. On three sides of the lists were ranged the goodly company, none of the choicest, but numbering in their equivocal ranks some stalwart frames, and honest, courageous-looking countenances. On the fourth side, a wooden bar stretched completely across the room, partitioning off an alcove at its extremity into a species of private box, where the hospitable 'Jem' received his more aristocratic visitors, and to which, as 'Corinthians,' or 'swells,' we were immediately admitted. Here we found Maltby completely in his element; an enormous cigar in his mouth, a comforting glass of brandy-and-water at his elbow, and his elaborate costume of white neckcloth, studs, and ball-going suit of sables, covered by a rough and venerable pea-jacket. He was busily engaged in watching the preliminaries for an amicable set-to between the 'Battersea Snob' and 'Nappy Jim,' or the 'Sprig of Seven Dials,' two dwarfish heroes, who were now exchanging a cordial shake of their gauntleted hands previous to an uncompromising encounter. 'Won't ye do as we do, gentlemen?' said our host, offering a tankard full of champagne and a box of tempting 'weeds.' 'We may as well wet our whistles, while these little chaps give and take a belly-full.' And as we lit our cigars, and prepared for a good view of the proceedings, we saw, by the manner in which pots of beer were set down untasted, and pipes re-

moved from sundry queer-looking countenances, that each stunted Hercules was an object of intense interest and admiration to his own backers in that motley assemblage. I confess to a partiality for a glove-fight—a fine athletic exercise, it develops the muscular vigour, and, to a large extent, the mental resources, of the combatants, without any of the brutality, the butchery, of an actual prize-fight. It exhibits the same amount of activity, the same fine proportions and commanding attitudes, the same presence of mind in difficulties, the same generous forbearance to a fallen foe; nor does it disgust the eye and shock the feelings, by the spectacle of a brave man, reduced to helplessness through punishment and exhaustion, struggling gamely on, when overtaxed nature has cried, Enough. It is, in short, a tournament in place of a combat *à l'outrance*; and to those who own to an affection for manly and athletic exercises, a rattling 'set-to' between two proficientes cannot fail to be an interesting sight. There is much to be said for and against our national practice of prize-fighting. Its enemies do not hesitate to denominate it 'a brutal exhibition;' its friends and supporters seldom go further than admitting that it is 'a necessary evil;' but without entering upon the oft-repeated arguments, sustained by such expressions as 'Old English pluck,' 'British love of fair play,' 'cowardly recourse to the knife,' 'bull-dog courage,' and 'never hit a man when he's

down'—it must be acknowledged that the history of the P. R. records instances of gallantry and heroism that would not have disgraced the romantic chivalry of the middle ages. When the famous Jackson, 'champion' of England, breaking his leg in the second round of a prize-fight, requested to be allowed to sit down, and offered to finish the battle in a chair, he presented no bad specimen of that spirit which, under other circumstances, and with other opportunities, has made the name of Englishmen a type of all that is resolute, daring, and invincible. We have a high authority in the expression of Napoleon, that, 'they never know when they are beaten.' But, in the meantime, the 'Sprig of Seven Dials,' after a miraculous display of science, tactics, ingenuity, and activity—after a vast deal of scuffling, struggling, and kicking up the dust—after many a sound thwack and lightning parry, at length finds his head under the griping arm of the 'Battersea Snob,' who rains down on that unprepossessing countenance a shower of blows that but for the muffle which covers his relentless knuckles, would present a ghastly spectacle indeed.

'The Sprig is in chancery,' says mine host, removing a cigar from his lips; 'walk round and show yourselves;' and the panting combatants, untwining from the close embrace of strife, proceed to regain their breath, as they strut round the arena, displaying to their admirers two very ugly faces, two wiry, muscular, and hardy-looking frames.

'A shower of browns,' the coppers mingled with silver from our private box, rewards their exertions; and a call of 'Time' from our landlord stimulates them to fresh activity, or, as Maltby says, putting on his hat to accompany us back to St. James's-street, 'they take a suck at the lemon, and at him again.'

We were in the act of leaving the door, when a tremendous 'hullabaloo,' and loud voices in angry altercation, caused us to return, in time to see reduced to practice those principles of self-defence which had lately been witnessed in theory. A tall, savage-looking negro was standing in the bar, and with all the volubility of his race when excited, was abusing all who came near him, and, as he dwelt upon some unintelligible grievance, working himself into a passion that was frightful to behold. At length, grinding his ivory teeth, while the whites of his eyes rolled with rage, he addressed an epithet to our hostess, a most respectable woman, that roused Maltby's chivalrous ire to the utmost, and being a large, powerful man, and an accomplished fighter, he would soon have annihilated the black, had he not been checked by the stalwart arm of our host. 'He is not big enough for you or me, my lord; we should kill him,' said he, laying his heavy hand on the chafing nobleman. 'Here, Buster, this darky's getting troublesome; come and put him out.' I looked round to see the champion who was to accomplish this dangerous feat, and to my astonishment recog-

nised the dirty little waiter, who came tumbling out at the summons in the most business-like manner imaginable.

The contrast was too ludicrous between the tall, well-grown negro, and the diminutive, quiet little Londoner, and the first blow aimed by the child of the sun must, I thought, have demolished his adversary. Not so; it passed harmless over the waiter's bushy head, and the little man rattled in his 'one, two,' in return, with a force and velocity that sent the black down as if he had been shot. Once more Sambo made his attack, butting with his woolly head at the active little combatant; and once more, foiled by science and agility, he measured his length upon the floor, this time in the immediate vicinity of the door, through which he found himself bundled into the street by the dexterous Buster, with no inclination to renew the contest, the waiter returning to his former employment of pot-filling and glass-wiping, as though such encounters were in the common course of his daily business.


Many a hearty laugh did we enjoy over the incident during our walk along the now silent and almost deserted streets, and we reached the broad steps and frowning portals of Crockford's pandemonium ere we had half done discussing the fighting qualities of the waiter and the speedy emancipation of the black. Good-natured Maltby would not suffer either of us to enter the club, insisting on our

accompanying him home to his comfortable little bachelor's abode in Queen-street. 'If Hillingdon once gets you in there,' said he to me, 'you will both begin 'punting;' sit up till five o'clock, lose three hundred a-piece, and go home disgusted. Much better come with me; I'll give you some supper, the best brew of cold punch in Europe, and then we'll smoke a cigar and have a good long talk about hunting.' We laughed heartily at our friend's devotion to his favourite pursuit; and with the easy readiness of youth to accept the first diversion that offers itself, we strolled on, arm-in-arm, to his abode, and finished the night in the manner he proposed.

CHAPTER V.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

IF ever man existed of whom it might be said, 'that he knew the right, and yet the wrong pursued,' that man was Lord St. Heliers. With a high position, a large fortune, great abilities, a powerful frame, and an iron constitution, he had opportunities of fame and distinction enjoyed by few, and yet he made all these advantages subservient to the purposes of amusement and self-indulgence : whilst others of his own standing, far inferior in talents and acquirements, were taking 'the House' by storm with their eloquence, or convincing by the calm arguments of reason the unimpassioned judgments of 'Another Place,' St. Heliers was betting at Newmarket or hunting at Melton ; whilst the associates of his boyhood were winning fame and building reputations in the varied walks of public life, he was celebrated but for the cutting sarcasm of his witticisms, or the dissolute recklessness of his orgies. To the scoffer's requisites for living well, 'a bad heart and a good stomach,' he added a temper that nothing could ruffle, and nerves that no catastrophe could shake ; perhaps a more good-natured man than



St. Heliers never existed, nor one with a worse heart. He looked upon the world around him but to laugh at it, and measured by his own selfish guage, not only the conduct, but the very feelings of his neighbours. Did he see a kindly action, he set it down to the score of a far-seeing self-interest; did he hear a virtuous sentiment, he dubbed it a well-acted piece of consummate hypocrisy. 'I never give any man credit for being a fool,' such was one of his favourite maxims; and he considered no piece of folly so glaring as that of inconveniencing self for the purpose of benefiting another. And yet was this man the most agreeable companion; in the language of the world, 'the best fellow' that was to be met with in the whole range of London society. His anecdotes were so well told, his satire of himself, as well as others—for he never spared his own failings—so lively and humorous, his dry, quaint manner so original, that as the ladies smiled at his repartees, and the clubs rang with his sallies, he was universally voted the most popular fellow in England. With his quick insight into character, and insatiable appetite for amusement, new faces and young companions were absolutely necessary; and from my first introduction to him, he 'took me up,' as people call it, and bestowed upon me the equivocal advantage of his intimacy. From my lively disposition and reckless habits, he probably foresaw that I should contribute much to his amusement, so long as I could 'live the

pace' with him ; nor did he care that, when ruin stared me in the face, I must eventually drop into the rear, beggared and dishonoured through *his* *friendship*. What did it matter to him ? There would be more young ones coming on.

Such was the man who had invited me to accompany him to a dinner at Richmond, with a small party as he said, 'not composed entirely of men ;' and as we were to go early, and enjoy the fine weather on the river during the afternoon, I had scarcely finished a late breakfast, consequent upon Maltby's prolonged hunting-lecture, ere it was time to adjourn to his lordship's house, whence we were to take our departure. A perfect little dwelling-place it was, too, with its front windows enjoying the comparatively fresh breeze from the park, and its hall opening into a quiet street, whose *cul-de-sac* precluded all the noise of traffic which pervades each busy thoroughfare. The sun shone with a tropical warmth upon the dry white pavement, the crossings alone being knee-deep in mud ; for it appears that, in London, there can be no medium between the dust of the Sahara desert and the floundering difficulties of a morass. St. Heliers had asked me to come early, and smoke a cigar with him before starting ; and on my admittance by his servant, I was immediately ushered into his lordship's snuggerly, or 'boudoir,' as he called it, where I found him sedulously engaged in the consumption of tobacco, and assisted

by a good-looking, gentleman-like man, whom he introduced to me as Captain Lavish, of some hussar regiment.

Sitting on a well-cushioned ottoman, in the quiet enjoyment of an enormous pipe, his low, square frame enveloped in the folds of a shawl dressing-gown, his broad forehead, short curly hair, and large bushy whiskers, all betokening strength in repose, I could not help thinking what a good Turk St. Heliers would make in a picture, if taken in that attitude and costume; nor would the sly humorous twinkle of his eye have been out of character with some sedate Mussulman, grave by profession and rollicking by nature. He received me with some joking allusion to military punctuality, and ran on in his dry, amusing manner into a most laughable account of the battalion to which I belonged, retiring in rather unseemly haste from a field-day, when caught in a tremendous shower of rain some days previously; and as he was quizzing the hurried retreat with an affectation of military language and detail, I interrupted him with 'Right in front, St. Heliers; you civilians can never understand these things—we marched into the barracks right in front.' 'So you did, my dear fellow,' was the instantaneous reply; 'of course that was the reason that you were *left behind*;' and he went on with his description in a manner that brought tears of laughter into the eyes of his two listeners. Such readiness, such a happy

knack of creating mirth, such a keen sense of the ludicrous, I never met in any one else. And yet this flow of wit, abundant as it was, never became obtrusive—never for an instant verged upon noise and vulgarity.

Nothing could go off better than did our dinner at Richmond. Lavish drove me down in one of St. Heliers' phaetons; he himself, Mdle. de Rivolte, (a *danseuse* of European celebrity,) a much rouged German Countess, and another dandy, completing the party, and travelling socially in a britzka. I found my companion and charioteer a very agreeable, careless, good-humoured fellow, and we struck up a great alliance, much cemented by sundry potations of champagne-cup, a beverage highly approved of by the fairer portion of the company. We agreed to dine early, so as to have the whole evening to enjoy upon the river, when the heat of the day was past. Jest, repartee, merriment, and broken English—the popping of corks, the ringing of glasses, half-blown roses, floods of sunshine, Venetian blinds, and cold currant-tart, made up a highly inspiring scene. Mdle. de Rivolte declared her determination to be sculled about upon the river by no one but *ce cher Grand*, an arrangement which St. Heliers did not seem entirely to approve, but which, with his usual imperturbable good humour, he immediately acceded to. Lavish got the others safely afloat in a punt, not without misgivings on the part of the German, whose

unsteadiness was not wholly attributable to the water ; and lighting our cigars, the two freights floated luxuriantly down the stream, as the last beams of sunset gilded the fresh green foliage of the merry month of May.

An occasional stroke of my sculls soon bore us far beyond the more tardy progression of the punt ; and as I gazed at my companion, whose eyes sparkled and cheeks flushed with enjoyment of her holiday (for it was not an opera night), and whose tasteful dress, classical head and neck, silky dark hair, and long eyelashes, made amends for rather irregular features and a very inferior complexion, I could not help thinking that she was really fascinating, and that all this was uncommonly pleasant. ‘ You like England, Mons. Grand,’ she said, in her pretty broken English, after a long description of the sunny haunts she loved in *la belle France* ; ‘ but you have nevere seen my contrée,’ and she warbled out the refrain of some melodious old French roman—

C'est l'espérance, qui fait l'avenir ;
Sans espérance, mieux vaut, mieux vaut mourir.

‘ *Mieux vaut, mieux vaut mourir,*’ she repeated, almost in a whisper, and relapsing into a dreamy reverie, she gazed downwards upon the water, as though its rippling current could bear her thoughts far, far away into the golden regions of the future. And here, thought I, is a woman whose whole education

has been for the public ; whose appearance nightly on the stage is greeted by the applause of thousands ; who cannot step into her carriage, without hearing a passer-by exclaim, 'There goes Rivolte ;' whose name is in every paper, as her picture is in every print-shop ; who has achieved fame, for such she has been taught to consider this notoriety ; who has arrived at the pinnacle of her ambition, and yet, in her woman's nature, she pines for the domestic pleasures of a peaceful home ; she anticipates the time when she shall retire from the public gaze, and hide her weary head beneath a husband's roof—probably when the time does come, it will bore her exceedingly, but that will be the fault of her previous education, not the law of her instinct. Meanwhile, she is melancholy and depressed ; she must be consoled ; and with this charitable view, I offered her those quiet and respectful attentions ever so much prized by a woman who is not quite certain of her position, and doubly acceptable from their contrast to the obtrusive gallantries of which such women are generally the objects.

If you would make arrangements for a pic-nic, a *fête champêtre*, or any out-of-doors excursion in our native land, mind that, in addition to the corkscrew and the salt, you remember to take with you plenty of plaids, umbrellas, and Macintosh cloaks, for the three fine days of an English summer too surely end with their proverbial thunderstorm. We were far

a-head of the party in the punt, gliding smoothly over one of those wide reaches which form so delightful a variety in the Thames ; the sun had been some hours below the horizon ; the moon, after an unsuccessful attempt, had been obscured by clouds ; and the weather, sultry all day, became more oppressive as the dusk deepened into darkness. My fair companion and myself were so engrossed with our conversation, that we had scarcely observed the threatening aspect of the night, and we were in the act of turning homewards, with a remark that the others would wonder what had become of us, when a few heavy drops, plashing loudly into the stream, warned us of what was to follow. I put the boat's head round and pulled vigorously for the shore ; the only thing I learned at Eton (to my shame be it said), the art of sculling, now stood me in good stead, and we reached the bank just as a heavy peal, thundering above our heads, brought down a deluge of rain, which rendered poor Rivolte's exclamation of '*Eh ! la pluie !*' an unnecessary commentary. Despite the danger of such a position, there was nothing for it but to take shelter under a huge elm tree, preferring the remote chance of being struck by lightning to the disagreeable certainty of being drenched from head to foot. It was a bore even for *me* to undergo a complete drenching in light summer costume ; but for my tender companion it was a serious matter indeed. Luckily the tree to

which we had fled was in full summer foliage, and a roof of green leaves will keep out a certain quantity of wet ; so for a time I had only to defend my charge from the chilling night breeze, which struck colder and colder as the rain descended. Divesting myself of as much clothing as decency would permit, I wrapped my neckcloth, coat, and waistcoat, round her shivering form, reserving for my own defence a pair of thin white trousers and a linen shirt. What a situation for a *première danseuse* at her Majesty's Theatre and a subaltern of her Majesty's body-guard ! There were we, Coralie de Rivolte and Digby Grand, cowering beneath the storm under an old tree on the banks of Father Thames, the one lavishing, the other receiving, those cares and attentions which, under such circumstances, are due from the stronger to the weaker sex. The storm cleared off—would it had lasted twice as long ! Coralie had been kept tolerably dry by my solicitude, and a bright moon shone placidly down upon us as I sculled the dancer back to Richmond, bending leisurely to my oars, and ever and anon whispering in her ear no unwelcome syllables of homage and admiration, couched in her own polished language, so expressly adapted to the voice of gallantry.

'*Oh que faire? il est parti, mitor,*' exclaimed Coralie, in an altered voice, and with a frightened expression of countenance, as, on mooring the boat under the terrace of our hotel, a servant, evidently awaiting

our arrival, informed us that our party had taken their departure for town immediately after the storm had cleared off, leaving a message that if we ever returned, we should follow them in St. Heliers' brougham, which had come down expressly to take him home at night, but which his lordship, with his usual gallantry, had left for the accommodation of Mdlle. de Rivolte. Surely, thought I, my star is in the ascendant: first of all, to be stormstayed on the river with the charming Frenchwoman, and then to come in for a *tête-à-tête* drive of ten long miles back to London in the same fascinating society!

'Don't hurry that bay horse,' I said to Lord St. Heliers' coachman; 'I am sorry you have had so long to wait.' And as I crossed his palm whilst making this civil speech, he took me at my word. The brougham horse was a rare trotter, but I think we were quite two hours on the road; and as we parted at the door of Coralie's neat little villa, where she was received by an anxious elderly lady, we had become such friends as can only be made by a partnership in difficulties, with youth on one side and beauty on the other. How dreary looked the inside of the dark-lined brougham without the white dress of my companion! How her pretty rapid accents rung in my ears, and the gentle pressure of her little gloved hand still seemed to cling to mine! The lamps glared reproachfully in upon me as I sat in solitary reverie; and the accelerated roll of the

wheels kept incessantly repeating a monotonous chorus—' Fanny Jones, Fanny Jones,' ' this is worse, this is worse ;' till I was set down at the door of my own lodgings, with a beating heart and an excited brain, to dream through the livelong night of the piquante smile which lent such an indescribable charm to Coralie de Rivolte.

Enslaved by the fascination of the dancer, I now frequented the opera with a regularity that the unassisted attractions of music and ' spectacle' could never have brought out. Hillingdon, Lavish, and myself were fortunate enough to possess the best box in the house, as we considered it—that which commanded the nearest view of the dresses and features of the performers—enabled us to catch every one of the ' asides' not intended for the amusement of the public ; and, above all, possessed a communication with that region of chalk, machinery, and reality denominated ' behind the scenes.' Here would we assemble to pronounce our opinion on tenor, soprano, contralto, and baritone ; to discuss the efficiency of a chorus, or the harmony of a scene. I for one could never even whistle an air correctly ; Hillingdon, who was by way of being an amateur, made fearful havoc of Bellini on the violoncello ; and Jack Lavish, if unfortunately he arrived before the concluding scene of the opera, could hardly keep his eyes open, till roused by the attractions of the ballet. Such were the trio that sat in judgment on the gifted composers of the sunny south.

We usually dined together at Crockford's, if not otherwise engaged ; and after the very best dinner it was possible for Francatelli to serve, diluted by the most undeniable of liquors, we rose from our unpaid-for banquet (the great charm of those little *réunions*), and sped our way to the scene of brilliancy and enchantment that burst upon our view from the dark interior of ' Stage Box, No. 1, Ground Tier.' What a thrill of excitement and pleasure used to come over me, as, drawing aside the heavy curtain that shrouded us from the public, I adjusted my double-barrelled glass to take a thorough survey of that variegated assemblage, to note the occupants of those boxes to which I had the *entrée*, and to mark the new faces or unexpected combinations of old ones, which formed the detail of this worldly kaleidoscope. Then as I carefully set aside the rare bouquet furnished by Harding for Coralie, Jack Lavish would enter, with some choice bit of scandal which levelled all our glasses at a small dark box on the third tier opposite, to take a deliberate survey of a classic and beautiful head, with one white camelia in the dark massive hair, bending gracefully towards a white waistcoat, surmounted by a large pair of whiskers and accurate mustachios ; whilst Jack whispers in my ear an improbable story about Austrian tyranny and a Hungarian countess.

Swiftly sped the moments on the wings of song, and soon the preparations for the ballet brought us

back from the different boxes where we had been paying visits and retailing small talk, to our own incomparable position for inspecting the 'many-twinkling feet,' and swallowing the dust and chalk kicked up by those active members, whose proportions, however, will not always bear the closest survey. But the band of figurantes opens out in graceful, undulating lines, and bounding forth into light from the dark background of the stage, like a butterfly released from its dingy prison, Rivolte bends, curtsying to the ground, in acknowledgment of the tumultuous applause which ever greets her entrance. 'Rivolte' she is to that admiring crowd, but 'Coralie' to me, as I feel when her dark eye, glancing round the house, softens into tenderness as it rests upon my box. Bouquets are showered upon the favourite dancer, and as mine goes spinning to her feet amongst the others, it is distinguished from the rest, and I can see *that* is the one she presses to her lips whilst bowing her gratitude to the enthusiastic throng; *that* is the one which accompanies her through the intricate evolutions of the *pas de fascination*, and is clasped to her panting bosom in the impassioned attitude with which that voluptuous dance concludes. Mine, too, are the congratulations which greet her most acceptably, as, hurrying behind the scenes, I await the breathless fair one with cloak and shawl; and tender are our mutual inquiries and allusions to the Richmond wetting and its conse-

quences. Coralie's carriage is in waiting, and having wrapped her up most assiduously, I conduct her carefully to the stage-door, through all the confusion of men in paper caps, moving scenes, dancers in full dress, but whose rouge and white satin shoes look less brilliant in colour, more brick-dust and less carmine, more yellow and less snowy, than when illumined by the glare of the foot-lights; actors and actresses, dressed in plain clothes, going away like other people; and all the litter, dust, and rubbish inseparable from the getting-up of a magnificent spectacle.

As I hurried with Coralie down the dark street at the end of which her brougham lamps were shining, and was making the most of the very short time allowed us for conversation, she stopped suddenly in the midst of some playful coquettish remark, and grasping my arm convulsively, staggered against me as if she would have fallen; at the same instant, a swarthy, Spanish-looking individual, coming brusquely between us, and addressing her by her Christian name and in language I could not understand, but whose accents betrayed anger and impatience, seemed to chide her fiercely though familiarly. I returned the push with interest, and interposed my person between the dancer and her unwelcome acquaintance, Coralie begging me, in trembling accents, to be calm, whilst the stranger turned the whole tide of his wrath from the lady upon her companion. Not one word could I understand, but the man

appeared so angry as to be dangerous ; and I kept my eye steadily fixed upon him, whilst I gradually edged my companion towards her carriage, which we were now approaching. Lucky for me that I did so : infuriated by my perseverance, and probably additionally irritated by receiving no answer to his torrent of abuse, he drew from beneath his waistcoat a long, narrow dagger, with which he made a lunge at my breast, that, had it taken effect, would have been fatal. I saw the cold blade gleaming in the lamp-light, and catching his wrist rapidly with one hand, I dealt him with the other such 'a facer' between the eyes, as sent him down upon the pavement prostrate, and for a moment insensible. Quickly I placed Coralie in her carriage, amidst her incoherent entreaties that I would not accompany her, and closing the door I bid the coachman drive rapidly home ; but short as was the time that elapsed in these arrangements, when I retraced my steps a few yards to look after my late antagonist, he was gone ; not a vestige of the fracas remained ; and had it not been that Coralie's voice was ringing in my ears, imploring me to be patient, and assuring me that 'he knew me,' I should have looked upon the events of the last few minutes as the delusions of a dream, so unaccountable was this sudden outrage and its conclusion.

All night long I tossed and turned upon my bed, thinking over this adventure. Now I fancied I had

been attacked by some unfortunate lunatic ; but the evidence of the man's previous acquaintance with Coralie, and the manner in which he conversed with her, forbade the supposition. Then it occurred to me he might have some claim upon the dancer, which he had a right to establish—a brother, a lover, perhaps a husband. The latter supposition was decidedly uncomfortable, as it involved the probability of a further acquaintance with this swarthy hero, and the likelihood of another fracas, to end, perhaps, in a duel. From this contingency my thoughts naturally turned to Coralie herself, and the anomalous connexion that existed between us. We carried on a vigorous flirtation, which on her side appeared to be fast verging on the sentimental, whilst for my own part I felt conscious that I liked and admired her as much as it was possible for me to like and admire any one but myself. This was all very well for the present ; but how was it to end ? I was not by any means satisfied with the terms upon which Coralie stood with Lord St. Heliers ; she certainly encouraged no dangles about her but my unworthy self ; yet to all denials, and 'not at homes,' St. Heliers was an invariable exception. His carriages were at her service when her own horses were lame. His servants were continually going and coming from the house in Park-lane to the pretty villa. Yet he never appeared at the latter domicile himself, and seemed to encourage,

or at any rate to have no objection to, my frequent visits and constant attendance upon Rivolte. And now if, in addition to all this, a husband should turn up unexpectedly, what a piece of work there would probably be. With this consolatory conviction I fell asleep. Nor were my waking thoughts much clearer when, on being called the following morning, I received a tiny three-cornered note, addressed in Coralie's well-known hand to Mons. le Capitaine Grand, &c. &c., imploring me, in highly figurative French, not upon any account to call upon her or come near her till I should hear again, and promising to explain all on the Saturday following, after the opera.

Whether my cogitations had any effect upon my actions, I know not; but certain it is, that after bath, breakfast, and matutinal cigar, I strolled leisurely down to a well-known fencing-room, of which I was at that time a member; and with a sort of vague idea that all foreigners were adepts with the small sword, and that I only wanted a little more practice to become a fencer, I donned the wire mask, the buff jacket, and gauntlet-glove, and took my accustomed place amongst the pupils of this courtly science. The *maitre d'armes* himself, an old officer of the Grand Army, with the strength of a Hercules, and the energetic activity of a Frenchman, was, besides, *rusé* beyond his compeers in the management of his weapon; and I knew, that to

hold my own with him was to be infinitely superior to any chance antagonist in Europe. As I entered the room he was busily engaged with a wiry, active-looking figure, whom I could not help fancying I had seen before, but whose mask prevented the possibility of my identifying him. 'Who is he?' I whispered to Maltby, who was of course present, devoted as he was to all athletic exercises, and who was regaining his breath after having, as he expressed it, 'polished off a corporal in the Life Guards.' 'I don't know,' he replied; 'but he is the best fencer I have seen in England. He hit Fleury three to one in an assault just now, and we think Fleury one of the quickest in Paris; and I doubt if our muscular *maitre* himself will be able to hold his own with him.' And sure enough, as the stranger disengaged, doubled, lunged, recovered, and returned, with a new, and apparently fatal *riposte*, I could see that the best fencer in London had enough to do to cover his body with his blade.

'Now then, Grand, for a breather,' said Maltby: and ere long, I found myself fully occupied with *carte*, *tierce*, *thrust*, and *parry*, and my whole energies concentrated on the button of my opponent's foil. There were several other pairs of fencers in the room, besides an assistant giving lessons; and what with the stamping, shuffling, clashing of steel, cries of *Hola!* *Hein!* and other vociferous French exclamations, and the deep voice of the assistant,

with his reiterated words of command—‘*Fendez-vous—en garde—double—degagé—battement—un, deux—fendez-vous*’—a general action might have been carried on with less noise. This confusion, and my own engagement with so skilful an adversary as Maltby, prevented my noting much of what was going on; but in the midst of a rapid and furious assault, we were both arrested, as if spell-bound, by a deep groan of agony, and a heavy fall on the dusty floor—the stranger was run right through the body by a broken foil! To describe the consternation and tumult that ensued is impossible: voices in every key and half-a-dozen languages demanding explanations, and proffering advice and assistance. One rushed off for a surgeon, another called loudly for cold water; the more composed bore the form of the ill-fated fencer into the ante-room, and order was at length restored by the *maitre*, who was the only person that preserved his coolness and judgment amidst the confusion. A surgeon speedily arrived, and whilst he was examining the wound, and pronouncing it dangerous in the extreme, the *maitre d’armes* explained to me the circumstances of the accident.

It appears that the stranger, who gave his name as Mons. de Rivas, but whom my informant thought much more like a Spaniard than a Frenchman, and who that morning made his first appearance in the fencing-room, had taken off his buckskin jacket, and

was reposing himself, after an assault in which he had displayed wonderful science and dexterity, when Mons. Fleury, his previous antagonist, who had retired to put on his every-day attire, re-entered the fencing-room, and taking up a foil, proceeded to discuss with the stranger the advantages of a certain 'parry' and 'return' which had been put in practice in their late contest. The latter, whose French was not very intelligible, anxious to explain his meaning, placed himself in position to give a practical illustration, and, in defiance of the fencing-master's warning, begged Fleury to lunge at him; observing, 'they were equally defenceless in point of costume.' The quickest wrist in Paris took him at his word; but in the *battement* which preceded his lightning lunge, the weapon broke short off beneath the button; and ere Fleury could stay his hand, the foil, now pointed and sharp as a small sword, had entered beneath the ribs of his antagonist, and going clean through his body, re-appeared at his back. The wound was dangerous in the extreme, if not mortal, and poor Fleury's distress was awful to witness. The kindest-hearted man alive, he seemed quite paralyzed at being the unconscious cause of so fatal an injury. As they bore the now insensible form from the scene of the catastrophe, I caught a glimpse of his depending head, and pale, wan features. What was my horror and astonishment to recognise my antagonist of the night before, and the

mysterious acquaintance of Coralie! His livid and sallow features, distorted with pain, looked scarcely more ghastly than when I had seen them some twelve hours before, contracted with rage and jealousy, as they glared upon me in the lamp-light; and to render assurance doubly sure, and prove his identity beyond a doubt, there was a red and swollen mark upon the forehead, that I well knew was the impress of the crushing blow I had been obliged to deal him in self-defence.

CHAPTER VI.

WAYS AND MEANS.

AS may be supposed, the life I was now leading was not very consistent with a small allowance, irregularly paid; and the friendship of Lord St. Heliers, the favour of Mrs. Man-trap, who was pleased 'to take me up' very fiercely, and the *liaison* with Coralie, were, each and all, the means of draining the account at Cox's to the uttermost farthing. Of course, no bills were ever allowed to be 'advanced a stage' by being looked over, and the idea of *paying* was not dreamt of for an instant. My actual income kept me in gloves and perfume, perhaps blacking. And the uninitiated will marvel how I obtained the necessaries, not to say the luxuries of life. But the artificial state of society, which forces the youngest son or the embarrassed heir to 'spend his half-crown upon sixpence a day,' in justice furnishes means and appliances wherewith to solve that problem, for a time at least. The noble invention of counters, forming a fictitious credit, opens to him the resources of the gaming-table, at which an opportune run of luck may enable him to win a fortune

he has never staked. Early intelligence, or as it is called, 'good information,' on the turf, encourages him to invest large sums upon what may fairly be termed a foregone conclusion. If A beats B in public, giving him three pounds, and C beats A in a trial, giving him seven, it is obvious that when C and B are to meet at even weights, the exclusive possessor of the result of this trial has a great advantage in 'backing his opinion.' Billiards, too, for a skilful performer, may be worth a flourishing retail business, and whist realize a larger income than in these times could be wrung from many a dirty acre.

My proficiency in the two latter sciences, and my habit of never paying ready money, helped me for a time wonderfully; but it was to the turf that I looked as a permanent provision—an ever-yielding mine of wealth. My Derby-book, constructed upon strictly mathematical principles, had won me a few hundreds; but this was a certainty, as I had been 'betting round.' There was, however, another card in the pack, that I fondly hoped was to be 'the best thing out for many a year.' I had it from the very best information, in fact, reduced to a proof there was no gainsaying, that Major Martingale's 'Queen of the May' was to win the Oaks. She could not lose, so they said—the race was over! Queen of the May would come in by herself! Levanter, who was now on half-pay, and a regular turfite, had backed her heavily at Newmarket. I had 'got on,' as the

term is, at long-odds; and now her stable companion had won the Derby, and we, the select few, knew what an example the mare could make of him. This brought her up in the betting, and still I went on booking bet after bet in her favour. She left off even against the field on the Thursday night, and stood to win me a fortune. I dined with Colonel Grandison and a party of brother officers, but was absent and impatient till the repast was over. At Crockford's I could hear nothing new with regard to the morrow, and I went to bed earlier than usual to pass a fevered, restless night, and dream of the events of the following day.

I was awoke from a golden vision, in which the chesnut mare, adorned by Martingale's well-known colours, was leading the van at a killing pace, while the shouts of the multitude rent the sky, by my ruthless servant entering the room to inform me that Captain Lavish was waiting breakfast; and making as rapid a toilet as I could, I found my hungry friend, who was to drive me down to Epsom in his drag, with a party of scapegraces like himself. The day was beautiful—the dust laid by just sufficient rain—the team tractable and fast—the party all in high spirits and good humour, mostly backers of Queen of the May. Lavish was an agreeable companion, with a pleasant, careless manner, that was extremely fascinating; and what was more important to his freight, an excellent coachman. Many a jest and

repartee enlivened our drive; but even whilst our mirth was fastest and most furious, the sight of the pleasant country—the summer sky, and the fresh-blooming lilacs, so redolent of spring—brought back to one of the party thoughts and feelings much at variance with the actual scene. The sweet influence of nature in her loveliest aspect stole over my senses, and I found myself speculating as to whether there was not a higher destiny for man, even in this world, than to support a life of pleasure by a career of recklessness; whether the path I had chosen was, in truth, the happiest; and whether a course of self-denial and self-sacrifice—a sort of crusade in the cause of virtue—would not be, in reality, a far more satisfactory lot. ‘If Queen of the May wins the Oaks,’ I thought, ‘I shall retire from all this, pay my debts, get out of the hands of Mrs. Man-trap, cut Coralie, and devote myself to Zoë, my old and faithful flame; in short, turn over a new leaf.’ Ah, those new leaves! If half of them were turned over that are talked about, what a gigantic volume would they form in the life of every one of us.

But here we are at Epsom, looking so cool and roomy after the crowd and confusion of the Derby-day. How much pleasanter a meeting is the Oaks; with not half the people, or a quarter of the noise, it is so much more racing-like, so much more a matter of business, than the great three-year-old-scramble that precedes it. Off the drag I jump in

a twinkling, and away to Martingale's stable, where the mare stands, looking as like a winner as if she had already been painted by Herring in that character. Every one is full of confidence—from the Major's whiskers, curling in stupendous magnificence, as though they already anticipated a triumph, down to the stunted stable-boy, who believes there is but one race-horse in the world, and that one is his own especial care; all seem to think the event a certainty. The trainer begs me to put another fifty on for him, when I go into the ring; and Martingale swears that 'if Queen of the May can't beat them all to-day, as far as they can see, he will never keep a race-horse again.'

Flushed with confidence, and greedy still of gain, I elbow my way into the waving mass and Babel-like confusion of the betting-ring. What do I hear? They are laying odds upon 'the Queen,' as they call her; they are betting 6 to 4 'they name the winner.' What a time to *hedge*! Shall I make a certainty of winning a good stake, and lay against the favourite, or shall I stand the shot, and make a fortune? 'Stand the shot,' whispers the busy fiend at my elbow; and I accommodate a vociferous 'fielder' with six to four in hundreds, as my concluding stake, and close my book with the air of quiet determination with which we may fancy Napoleon shutting up his telescope, after giving his last orders at the critical moment which should decide

the fate of an army. Now I am at leisure to talk to the ladies, and pay my accustomed homage to Mrs. Man-trap; now I can trifle in half-crown 'lotteries' and glove bets—glad to cover with an affectation of frivolity the gnawing anxiety that is eating at my heart. Hark! the bell rings—the numbers are up—nine come to the post—and jewelled pencils are wielded by fairy fingers to mark the starters on 'Dorling's Correct Card.' The course is cleared; and the only two figures left on the turf are Martin-gale and his jockey, exchanging a few more last words. One after another the competitors sweep by in their preparatory canters; and, to my eye, the only dangerous-looking forms of the lot are St. Agatha and the Hospodar filly. St. Agatha made a sorry display at Chester, and we have got the filly's capabilities to a pound; so I feel much relieved by the certainty of victory. Mechanically I light a cigar; and ere the first half dozen fragrant whiffs have perfumed the atmosphere, they are off!—the pace tremendous; and St. Agatha's stable-companion, a ewe-necked, lop-eared weed out of Atropos, making the running!—our mare well up. The hill tells off the leader; and Queen of the May, accompanied by St. Agatha and the Hospodar filly, creep to the front. Down the hill and round the corner they come like a hurricane, the terrific pace creating a tail of half a mile; and at the distance, the race is between the three, whose names are equally vociferated as win-

ners, according to the fancy or the investments of the shouters. I am watching Martingale's colours narrowly with my glass. The Queen is halfway up the distance, nearly a length in advance. Can I believe my eyes? Hands and heels are at work as the Hospodar filly draws upon her; and the icy conviction shoots through me that our mare is beat. And now the three pass the stand, neck-and-neck. Our animal is game to the last, and it is just possible that she *may* pull through. No—no—ridden by Newmarket's finest horseman, nothing can save her. The Hospodar filly struggles to the front—St. Agatha clears the two with a tremendous rush, and, after one of the finest races on record, is landed a winner by a neck, the Hospodar filly second, and Queen of the May a moderate third!

What a facer! 2900*l.*,—and where to get the money? for on Monday next must this unfortunate stake be paid. If anything could console me—if anything could raise a laugh at such a moment, it would have been Martingale's crest-fallen appearance after so unexpected a defeat. The ruby countenance had become livid, the ambrosial whiskers hung limp and helpless, and the whole man was completely beaten and undone. I believe I did laugh and jest like others during the remainder of that eventful afternoon, but it was with a load at my heart that all the merriment in the world could not have got rid of.

Long and earnest was our consultation that night on the steps at Crockford's, as Jack Lavish and I formed a committee of ways and means. I could not have applied to a better person than Lavish for advice in pecuniary difficulties, as, probably, no man in England lived so continually in hot water with regard to money-matters as did that light-hearted dragoon. 'The only fellow to get you out of this,' said Jack, 'is my old acquaintance and benefactor, Mr. Shadrach. The time is so short that no regular practitioner in London would be man enough to produce 3000*l.* by two o'clock on Monday. But Shadrach will do it, I have no doubt; only you must submit to be robbed enormously.' And to Shadrach, accordingly, Jack agreed to drive me betimes the following morning.

It may be a grateful partiality—it may be an amiable weakness; but I confess that the Jews have always appeared to me a calumniated race. From spendthrift King John downwards, the Christian has ever pocketed the ducats and abused the donor. Very frequently has the worthy Israelite's loan become a gift; for gentlemen who are compelled to have recourse to such assistance are not always the best payers even to their fellow-Christians; and the usurer's profits, like those of a fashionable tailor, must needs be large to cover the amount of his bad debts. And directly there is a word said about suffering a Jew to become a legislator, the ingratitude

of his clients knows no bounds. What, a Jew!—‘an Ebrew Jew’ to become a lawgiver!—to pollute with his presence the chaste atmosphere of a British House of Commons! Forbid it, that religious and high-principled assemblage! Forbid it, worn-out revellers, who have all their lives been indebted to that wealthy tribe! Forbid it, fathers, who have eldest sons on fire to mortgage, and younger ones athirst to borrow! He has smoothed the paths of pleasure for our youth; he has mortified the canker-ing love of gain that blights the flower of our manhood; he has taught us foresight and caution, very likely a little practical law, to recreate our old age. And this is our return!

But here we are at Shadrach’s door; and Captain Lavish, who is evidently well known to the servant, is immediately admitted with his friend into the sanctum of the usurer. Unlike the dens of the city, where dirt and capital appear to go hand in hand, in whose dingy corners the emblematic spider spins unmolested, Mr. Shadrach’s gay and lightsome apartment was gorgeously furnished, with a good deal more style than taste, though adorned by one or two pictures of considerable value; whilst ottomans, flowers, and nick-nacks brought far more vividly to our minds the picture of hapless Rebecca than of the miserly Isaac of York. Our modern Isaac himself was a fresh-coloured, portly, good-humoured looking man, with little about him to betray his Hebrew

origin, save a pair of dark curling whiskers and a fine aquiline nose. And his air was courtesy itself, as he requested us to sit down, and begged to know in what he could be useful. I stated the case in a very few words, and expressed my willingness to 'make any arrangement'—the term invariably used to express the hopeless entanglement of one's affairs; only I insisted that the money must be forthcoming immediately. After a few pointed inquiries as to my expectations, it was decided that a post-obit bond was the only means of raising the necessary funds; and after some more unceremonious questions as to Sir Peregrine's age, health, habits, &c., it was finally agreed that I should give my bond, and all other necessary legal securities, for something like treble the amount I was anxious to obtain, with a handsome premium into the bargain to Mr. Shadrach: in consideration of which I was to receive on the following Monday morning, after the deeds were signed, &c., the sum of 3000*l.*, being just one hundred over and above my losses on that unfortunate Queen of the May. This knotty point settled, a glass of rare Amontillado was produced to ratify our treaty—Lavish whispering in my ear that I was fortunate not to be obliged to receive a butt of that straw-coloured vintage in lieu of hard cash,—a species of barter which would assist but little in liquidating my debts at Hyde Park Corner.

Heavy as was the weight thus removed from my

mind by Mr. Shadrach's assistance, I had still very considerable misgivings as to the course I was now pursuing. It was evident that paying three for one in my numerous extravagancies would ruin the finest fortune in the world; and, with all my thoughtlessness, I was not quite a fool, and had already perceived that, with Sir Peregrine's habits of carelessness and total disregard to business, his successor would find himself considerably hampered and involved. These reflections were none of the pleasantest, and I was not sorry to join Lavish, Hillingdon, and a few more, in what they called a quiet Greenwich dinner, where champagne-cup and other exhilarating mixtures should drown dull care, and where fun and frolic, amongst a man-party assembled for the express purpose of enjoying themselves, should reign unchecked. Hillingdon had agreed to drive me down in his cab. We had been for some time constant associates; and what the world calls 'great friends;' and as we sauntered leisurely along, inhaling the cool country breeze and enjoying the luxury of 'weather'—the only pleasure that with me has never palled,—my companion, who had a rich vein of poetry and originality in his composition, was most delightful. All Greenwich dinners are the same—flushed faces in a setting sun, old jokes, brown bread and butter, and an enormous bill, in which the white-bait, as Maltby calculated, are charged at the rate of half-a-crown a-piece. We talked about racing

and the Italian Opera, both rather sore subjects to one of the party; voted the beauty of the season had 'no figure;' took away the characters of sundry ladies of our acquaintance; and, finally, when the moon was up, and it was time to be going, prevailed upon Jack Lavish to sing us 'The gallant young hussar,' a monotonous chant, describing the success in love and war of a mustachioed juvenile, who generously promotes the espousals of a deserving bāt-man with his own ladye-love. I had begun dinner in a state of unenviably low spirits; but as bumper after bumper sparkled in my glass, I found my difficulties becoming 'small by degrees, and beautifully less;' and when I lit a two-foot Regalia, and took my place in Hillingdon's cab for our homeward drive, I had quite recovered my accustomed elasticity of temperament. Nay, more—I felt that sort of confident presentiment of fortune, which, if not the actual cause, is so often the forerunner of success.

Beautiful was the moonlit sky, and refreshing the cool night-breeze that fanned our heated temples, as we drove back to town. Careless, riotous pleasure-seekers as we were, the holy stillness of the hour awoke in us that higher and better nature of man, never wholly extinct even in the worst. We talked of the wonders of astronomy; speculated on the inhabitants of the myriads of stars which glittered over-head; got to Paley's *Evidences*, and discussed our own wild notions of a future state—not with the

vague speculation of the free-thinker—for, with all his faults, poor Hillingdon had a strong conviction of the truth, as he had learned it in his happy boyhood at his mother's knee—but rather with a dreamy tinge of romance and poetry, in which such spirits as my friend's are apt to indulge. There was something very German about Hillingdon's ideas, more particularly of the immaterial; and he was a devout believer in ghosts—having, as he himself averred, received no less than two warnings from those heralds of another sphere. Poor fellow! could all his talent, wit, and imagination have been exchanged for a few grains of common sense, it would have needed no ghost to foretell what must be the close of such a career and such a character as his.

Left fatherless from his boyhood, he had spent the greater part of his youth in travelling over the Continent. From the bull-fights of Madrid to the reviews of Peterhoff—from the salons of Paris to the ruined temples of immortal Greece, he had seen and done everything before he was eighteen; and at that discreet age found himself passionately in love with an Austrian lady, who had, unfortunately, taken the veil in a convent at Verona. How they manage these things I am unable to explain, nor was my friend disposed to enlarge upon the subject; but despite of bolts and bars—despite of monastic rigour and precautions, the cage was, one fine morning, found empty, and the bird had flown to

take shelter on the breast of young Hillingdon. Such a connexion was not likely to prosper. And the unfortunate girl, a prey to remorse and superstitious terrors—to say nothing of a well-grounded apprehension that she might be retaken and immured alive—being, besides, of a nervous, weak, and excitable temperament, terminated her existence by poison, and died in her lover's arms a very few months after the ill-fated elopement. At twenty, Hillingdon entered the Guards, in point of feeling and experience, an old man. Nothing but gambling appeared able to excite him. In all the sports and pleasures in which his comrades found such delight, he took part readily and successfully; but his heart was far away: and the only time his characteristic listlessness seemed to be overcome—the only moments in which he seemed to forget the past, and enter with energy into the present, were when dealing the cards upon which a fortune depended, or brandishing the dice-box whose imprisoned cubes should replenish or exhaust his yearly income.

Nor was it wonderful that such a character should be essentially a gambler. I have already adverted to his firm belief in ghosts; and his faith in 'luck' or fortune, as he termed it, was not inferior to his superstition. Often have I seen him rise from the 'board of green cloth,' and turning his chair thrice, from right to left, re-seat himself at the play-table, confident that success would follow this mystical

manœuvre. Often have I known him object to play in the company of certain individuals, whose faces, forms, or dress, he fancied were inimical to his 'destiny,' and patiently would he wait till such birds of ill-omen should take their flight, and allow him to enter unthwarted upon his speculations. With regard to his 'spirit-creed,' it was firm and unassailable. That very evening, as we rattled through the busy streets of London—so gay and lightsome after the unilluminated country highway—who would have supposed that the dashing, fashionable-looking dandy, driving that well-appointed cab from a jovial dinner-party to the glittering halls of Crockford's, was relating, in tones of awe and emotion, to his brother-reprobate, the thrilling experiences of what he called his higher state of being. Yet so it was. 'I give you my sacred word of honour, Grand,' he said, with an earnestness that impressed me with his own conviction of the truth of that which he related, 'that since she died in my arms I have seen her twice—ay, seen her clearly and distinctly as I now see you. She has spoken with me in words that I dare not and may not repeat, but with all the warmth and affection of her loving youth. Twice has she appeared to me, and each time has her visit been one of warning—each time has it been followed by some heavy and dreadful calamity. I saw her the night before my mother's death. I saw her the morning of that fatal duel, when I went out with Congreve as his

second, and poor young De Valmont was shot dead upon the ground. And I shall see her once, and only once again. At Rome—at Paris—will the third time be in London? I cannot tell; I know not how long it may be before my spirit-bride revisits me once more; but when that time does come, I shall know full well what it forebodes. I have a solemn presentiment in my own mind, that within four-and-twenty hours of the *third warning*, we shall meet, never to part again. And then people talk to me about the absurdity of believing in ghosts, as they call them, as if all the argument, all the reason in the world, could make me doubt that which I know to be a fact, not only by the evidence of my outward senses, but by the in-born conviction of my soul. However, here we are at Crockford's, and I only hope my dissertation on the supernatural will not affect your appetite for supper, or your 'sacred thirst for gain' afterwards.'

Doubtless, if men must play, and in the days of which I write it certainly appeared to be one of the exigencies of human nature, Crockford's was the best place at which to indulge that fatal passion. Now, when so many fine fortunes have melted away, so many bright spirits been ruined, in the undeviating pursuit of the science of numbers, illustrated by mechanical contrivances of dotted ivory, in which certain combinations too surely produce 'a seven' when the quotient deserves to be a 'four,' and *vice*

versd—in these more straitened times, of wheat at thirty-eight shillings, and an inexorable income-tax, it is perhaps as well that there should be no palace thrown open to the noblest and the gayest of the land—no board spread with the rarest dainties, and flooded with the choicest wines—and all ‘free, gratis, for nothing,’ in order to encourage more liberally the spirit of speculation and the practice of arithmetic. I firmly believe that many men played at Crockford’s who would never have played elsewhere; and such being the case, it will not admit of argument, that the destruction of that establishment is one of the improvements of the age; but nevertheless, it was very pleasant whilst it lasted; and to my frame of mind on the evening in question—harassed by my pecuniary difficulties, flushed with wine, and thirsting for excitement, no resort could have been so agreeable as the familiar halls of ‘Crocky.’

‘Nobody can throw a hand to-night,’ said St. Heliers, rolling good-humouredly into the supper-room, where Hillingdon and I were discussing a pleasing compound of champagne and seltzer-water. ‘Grand, my boy, how goes it? I am afraid the Derby winner was not so good a trial-horse as the stable fancied, and Queen of the May proved Queen of the May-not.’

‘Don’t talk of her, I beseech you,’ I replied. ‘I shall offer Martingale fifty pounds for her, being a pony

more than her value as a hack, to have the satisfaction of riding her to death.'

Whilst we thus conversed upon the topics of the day, the supper-room became more and more deserted; and as the occasional rattle of the dice-box in the next room became more distinctly audible, Hillingdon's impatience to go and 'have a shy' got more and more uncontrollable. I know not why, but although I had quite recovered my spirits, I felt a strange unwillingness to enter the play-room; and after the fatigues and excitement of the day, would far rather have smoked a soothing cigar upon the steps in the moonlight; but the eagerness of my companion induced me at any rate to go and 'see what they were doing;' and I sauntered listlessly behind him into the little screened-off temple sacred to Fortune.

Business was going on rapidly, and apparently most prosperously for the proprietor, whose capital furnished 'the bank.' Every seat at the table was occupied, and a double rank of spectators, and occasional speculators, stood behind those who played. As I came in, a Russian prince was in the act of throwing aside the box in disgust—his eleventh hundred having been quietly disposed of by a deuce-ace. His next neighbour, an English earl, was as instantaneously placed *hors de combat* for the present by the monotonous 'twelve out,' proclaimed by a lynx-eyed official with a rake and a green shade; and

his rising in ill-concealed vexation gave me a vacant chair, of which I immediately possessed myself. I was pretty well known as a fortunate player, and a glance went round the table which seemed to intimate that a change might now be looked for in the course of fortune—the bank having enjoyed an unprecedented ‘run.’

‘I won’t back him,’ muttered old Lord Growler; ‘he’s out of luck. They say he lost five thousand pounds on the Oaks.’

Not much reassured by his lordship’s remark, I asked modestly for a quiet hundred in counters; and with no vivid anticipation of success, waited till the box should come round to me in due course of the game.

Most of the players again threw out, amongst them Hillingdon and St. Heliers, who were sitting opposite, and my turn soon arrived to make my set, and call my main. I had remarked that ‘seven’—usually a favourite number amongst hazard players—had got into disgrace early in the evening, and was now seldom called. To this ‘main’ I accordingly determined to nail my colours, and putting down a fifty as my set, whilst I ‘threw away a pony’ on ‘the nick,’ I manfully shouted, ‘Seven’s the main—Seven!’ whilst the croupiers joined chorus with their buzzing repetition of ‘Make your game, gentlemen; the main is Seven.’ The dice rattled, the box fell, and a dotted eleven turned its welcome surface

upward. I need not say this was what is termed a nick, and as such, won me four 'ponies' for the one I had risked, as well as fifty pounds on my set. Again I repeated the auspicious number, and again with like success. In short, I was in a vein of good fortune; and as the players murmured accordingly as they won or lost—'what a capital caster,' or 'what infernal luck,' I increased my stakes to the utmost limits allowed by the table, and pursued my triumphant career. If a four or a ten came leaping from the box at the first intention, instead of the seven I had invoked, so surely that four I dribbled over the baize—so surely that ten dashed thundering on the board once again, in time to win me, according to the rules of the game, twice my investment on the chance of its appearance; and, finally, ere I threw out with my thirteenth main, I had what is termed 'broken the bank,' that is, exhausted the whole sum that they were prepared to lose on a single night, and had won, to my own share, upwards of four thousand pounds. How clean and crisp were the fresh, new notes that I thrust into my waistcoat-pocket; how pleasant the rustle of those tangible witnesses of my success. What a thrill of delight did I experience, as I felt that the infernal post-obit might now be dispensed with, and I was again comparatively free. However, I was too well schooled in the manners of 'my set' to allow my triumph to become apparent, and it was with an affectation of extreme carelessness that I received the congratula-

tions of St. Heliers and Hillingdon, both large winners, and allowed that 'I had been tolerably lucky, and had won a fairish stake;' much to the disgust of Lord Growler, who overheard my remark, and who was ready to cry with vexation, because his unbelief in my good star had induced him to bet against me, and had been the means of mulcting him to the amount of fourteen or fifteen pounds—a heavy loss to his lordship, with no family, and an income of £70,000 a-year—the reason he never ventured more than a sovereign at a time, was dissatisfied if he won, and miserable if he lost!

I am not usually an early riser, but the following morning saw me astir with 'the milkmaids and the postman,' representatives in London of the matutinal lark, and in the saddle, bound for the domicile of that modern Samaritan, good Mr. Shadrach. Of course, he was out of town, and spending the day at his 'willa,' as his servant called it, several miles from London, whither, without loss of time, it was incumbent on me to follow him. Suffice it to say, that two thoroughbred hacks were reduced to that state of exhaustion which a sporting baronet once described as being 'done as crisp as a biscuit,' ere I returned, having satisfactorily arranged matters with the usurer, and settled, as he prophetically remarked, 'that we should not require to do the post-obit *this time!*'

So eventful a week as that of my signal defeat at the Oaks, and unlooked-for triumph at Crocky's,

might well excuse me for some inattention, during that period of excitement, to the fairer portion of my acquaintance. Of Coralie I had heard nothing. I concluded she was out of town, as I saw by the bills of Her Majesty's Theatre that an inferior ballet was advertised in gigantic type, in which *divertissement Mesdles. Entrechat and Gavotte* were promoted for the nonce to the principal parts. I did not like to inquire of St. Heliers, and had no time to get as far as the villa, so I was compelled to remain in ignorance of the lovely dancer's whereabouts. Not so with Mrs. Man-trap; that enterprising lady, who had a passion for everything that was 'fast,' took care to remind me continually of her existence by a series of notes and messages, which at length brought me to her feet, or rather boudoir, into which charming little room only the most favoured among her visitors were admitted. Here, as in duty bound, I underwent a torrent of inquiries as to everything connected with my late proceedings; Mrs. Man-trap being one of those ladies who dearly love the last bit of news, whatever may be the subject thereof, and who are never satisfied without learning what they call the rights of it. Dearly I paid for my entrance on the numerous list of her adorers; for of all deaths, the most painful to my mind must assuredly be that of being 'talked to death;' and blue eyes, however languishing—showering curls, however glossy—forms of grace, and skins of alabaster—become

wearisome, if accompanied by a tongue that 'onward rolls, and rolls for ever.' I used to drive away from her door at such a pace, when released from these Courts of inquiry, that, upon one occasion, the safe and commodious wooden pavement being watered into a perfect glacierium, whilst the adjoining streets remained parched and dusty as the Great Desert, I lamed my cab-horse so badly as to be reduced to the necessity of throwing him out of work altogether, and replacing him immediately by a new purchase. Of course, there was but one emporium in London where a youth of my pretensions was likely to be able to suit himself, more particularly as the vulgar question of ready money was one with which the gentleman conducting the establishment was always unwilling to trouble a customer; and accordingly, the first time I found Maltby disengaged, I prevailed upon him to accompany me as far as Fitz-Andrews' yard, and give me the benefit of his judgment and experience in 'a deal.'

Time was that the horse-dealer, a race *per se*, was to be distinguished by his dress and appearance from all other trades and professions whatsoever. Slang, not to say vulgar manners, and apparel redolent of the stable, were the characteristics of the cloth; but *nous avons changé tout cela*—the 'dealer,' for we have dropped the substantive prefixed—'the dealer' of the present day would, we conceive, rather astonish those grandfathers who have spent all our money, and

entailed upon us only their love of horse-flesh and its appliances. A quiet suit of sables, a highly-polished exterior, and a choice vocabulary, are quite in keeping with the stall at the opera in London, and the second horse, silver cigar-case, and sandwich-box, which accompany them over the green uplands of Leicestershire. And surely this is a good exchange for the noise and vulgarity which betrayed the 'drunken couper' of the last century. We have now to deal with a man who is a gentleman, if not by birth, at least in manners and actions; and notwithstanding the proverbially sharp practice of those connected with the sale of horses, I will venture to say, that in no other trade will a customer meet with more fairness and liberality than will be shown him by the great dealers of London and 'the Shires.'

But here we are at the clean and dainty passage which leads into Fitz-Andrews' yard, and ringing the counting-house bell, we are ushered into the presence of a good-looking, middle-aged man, extremely courtly in his manners, and particularly well-dressed, to whom we state our business and requirements. Notwithstanding the affliction of an intermittent deafness, he takes our meaning with surprising quickness, and ringing another bell, we are handed over to the care of a most respectable-looking family ostler, if we may use the expression, who, in his turn, having accompanied us across the yard, consigns us

safely to the guardianship of Mr. Sago, the real mainspring of the establishment, the ostensible proprietor returning to prosecute his business in the counting-house.

'I have brought Mr. Grand to look at a cab-horse,' says Lord Maltby. 'Have you anything likely to suit him?'

To which Mr. Sago bows like an ambassador, and looks at Mr. Grand.

'Perhaps the captain will like to walk round the stables, my lord,' says the man in authority; and forthwith a couple of helpers are summoned, the one to strip, the other to re-clothe the horses submitted for an approval.

Before I can spare a glance for the animals, I inspect Mr. Sago, and it strikes me that never, no never, have I seen breeches and boots fit so marvellously well as those which encase his slender, well-turned limbs. Of course, he sleeps in them, and they are cleaned on his person, as such a fit cannot possibly be made 'to take off.' The man himself is moulded to be a horseman, and when mounted can, perhaps, make more of the animal that carries him, both as to action and appearance, than any other equestrian in London. In the meantime, Maltby has selected a grey, that looks very like what we want, and as, on being stripped, his make and shape are found to be faultless, we have him out into the yard, to ascertain his capabilities when in motion.

'Fine airy goer,' says Mr. Sago, as the grey horse fidgets sidling down the yard, in a manner that would give but little room for the vehicle intended to be attached to him;—'beautiful action, Captain Grand, and great docility—dray-horse power, sir, with the action of a *sylph*! Like to see him in harness, Captain?—a child might drive him with a silken thread;' and, accordingly, the grey is lapped in leather forthwith, and I embark on a voyage of discovery by the side of Mr. Sago.

'Let him go—don't hang at his head,' says the charioteer, making a virtue of necessity, as the horse, plunging vigorously forward, breaks away from the grasp of the attendant helpers, while Mr. Sago goes on talking, as if he were sitting at ease in an arm-chair. 'Town very full, sir, just now,' as we graze a landau, to avoid coming in contact with an omnibus. 'Great comfort to drive so handy a horse as this. I'm a *very* poor coachman myself; but I think I could steer him into the City to buy stock or to borrow money, Captain. Will you like to get your hand on him?' he adds, as by dint of consummate skill, and that delicacy of touch which horsemen call 'hand,' he succeeds at length in making the animal go quietly up to his bit; and as my practice in olden time with Cartouch's drag had given me some little insight into driving, I soon find that, with regular work, the grey is likely to make me a pleasant and valuable cab-horse. After a short

trial, I make up my mind to have him, and the only remaining point to be settled is as to price. For this I am again referred to the counting-house, where, after a brief interview with the proprietor, whose affliction has again attacked him, giving me some difficulty in making him understand that I do not wish to pay immediately for the horse, it is agreed that, if I like him, I am to give two hundred for him at no very remote period—if on further trial I find he will not suit me, I may return him for twenty-five pounds, which is a fair and liberal arrangement on all sides; and I walk out of the yard with Maltby, congratulated by Mr. Sago on my purchase, which he assures me is 'the most eligible cab-horse in London for appearance and knee action; and with *your* 'finger' upon him, Captain Grand, to make him bend himself, he will be the cynosure of a thousand eyes!'

CHAPTER VII.

MIMIC WAR.

THERE is a *bon-mot*, attributed, though I believe very unjustly, to F. M. the Duke of Wellington, to the effect, that 'if he were to put 40,000 men into Hyde Park, he had not one general officer in the service who could get them out again;' and this military sally has for years delighted the inexperienced civilian, who imagines that large bodies of soldiers are to be moved simply by word of command,—in other words, that it is only necessary to holloa at them, without the slightest regard to the technicalities of 'covering,' 'distance,' and 'priority of position;' for, with reference to the latter essential, you would commit no greater violation of etiquette by walking Lady A. quietly off to dinner, under the very nose of the Duchess of B., with whom, as host, the laws of society exact that you should lead the column, than would be laid to your charge, if, in your arrangements for a field-day, you should post your infantry on the right of your artillery, and destine your smartest regiment of light dragoons to occupy the left of the line. I have been led into

this digression by the recollection of the important manner with which my servant proffered the Order-book to my notice, in the pages whereof it was distinctly enacted in 'brigade orders,' that on the following morning the three regiments of Guards should form 'contiguous columns' in the explosive neighbourhood of Hyde Park powder-magazine, while a regimental ukase announced that we were 'to parade in review order, and that Captain Grand and a party would be 'furnished' to keep the ground.' And in compliance with these distinct commands, the following morning, at nine, saw me adorned with glittering epaulette, sash of gold, and bear-skin cap—no pleasant covering under a sweltering summer's sky—offering my valuable assistance to a troop of Life Guards and a handful of police, in restricting John Bull to a certain portion of the Park's dried-up surface, and prevailing on him to abstain from thrusting his unwashed face and opaque figure between the reviewing generals and the troops they were there to inspect. Certainly the good humour of an English mob is deserving of all praise; even under circumstances of political excitement, they seldom lose their natural relish for fun and frolic; and when they are met together for anything in the shape of a sight—the Lord Mayor's show, the prorogation of parliament, the Derby, or a spectacle such as the present—their sense of the ludicrous, and determination to enjoy themselves, are not to be

surpassed. The temper displayed by our police, who are truly a long-suffering generation, assists largely in keeping up this feeling of good-fellowship; and though a stalwart sentry may drop the butt of his heavy musket on a pair of sensitive toes, or the managed charger of a Life Guardsman disperse a knot of idlers with his disciplined gambols and the whisk of his long, heavy tail, roars of laughter alone greet the sufferers, who in their turn can seldom refrain from joining in the general mirth. I was much struck with this on the morning in question, when, having stationed myself at the point of greatest attraction, and consequently where there was most pressure from the crowd, I found that not even the size and weight of our athletic guardsmen were always sufficient to stem the rush of the populace, and I had occasionally to call in the assistance of a black charger and its immovable rider, the effect of which was instantaneous. But there was one figure that I had observed two or three times trenching upon the forbidden line, and being a gentlemanlike military-looking man, he had perhaps been allowed to creep rather more forward than the rest unmolested; but at length, on his attempting to separate himself from the crowd, and take up his position in the space set apart for officers in uniform and those who had tickets to witness the review, one of my sentries lost all patience, and ordering his firelock in most unpleasant proximity to a well-varnished

pair of boots, he at the same time bid the intruder stand back, and interposed his own massive person, in a manner that left no alternative. I saw an altercation was going on, and as I approached to request the gentleman civilly to withdraw, I overheard an angry expostulation between the intruder and the unmoved private.

‘I’m an officer, sentry. I insist upon being allowed to pass.’

‘Can’t help it, sir—not in uniform.’

‘I tell you I’m an officer. I have a right to go through the lines.’

‘Can’t pass without a ticket.’

‘I’ll report you, sir; I will, by heavens! I’m an officer; there’s my card. My name’s Walker—Major Walker, East India Company’s service.’

‘Major Walker, is it?’ said the stoical guardsman, who was, moreover, a bit of a wag, in a quiet way—‘then, if you *be* Major Walker, the best thing as you can do, is to *walk* off!’

I had some difficulty in preserving my gravity, as I came up and was appealed to by the irate field-officer. However, having every reason to suppose, from his manners and appearance, that he was what he represented himself, I passed him through on my own authority, and was thanked with a courtesy that showed my civility was not misplaced.

Sundry little episodes of the same kind, varied by the occasional ‘break-down’ of a temporary wooden

stand, and comical discomfiture of its occupants, served to pass the time until the troops had taken up the several positions assigned to them ; and as my situation was close behind the saluting point, from which favourable locality all the intricate manœuvres of the field-day were to be witnessed, I had an uninterrupted view of one of the most beautiful spectacles to be seen by the public in London, and one for which, unlike all our other national exhibitions, ' there is nothing to pay.'

By heaven! it is a splendid sight to see,
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there,)

says Byron, in his thrilling description of the eve of mortal fray ; but in this mimicry of war, the sight is even more splendid : there is no after-thought of pain or pity to mar the enjoyment of the glittering present, while happy is the fair one who recognises, or thinks she recognises, amidst that immovable mass of red and white, the martial form of a brother, a lover, or even a husband, assisting in the much-admired pageant. Wonderful is the infatuation of woman as regards a scarlet coat. In the absence of a veritable dragoon, and the gloomy listlessness of November, even the stained and draggled crimson of the fox-hunter has a charm ; but a real uniform of the killing hue, bedizened with gold lace, more especially if surmounted by a pair of mustachios, is irresistible.

Not the least beautiful portion of the day's display

was the mass of lovely and well-dressed women who had congregated to see the review; and many an exclamation of wonder and delight rose from that bewitching assemblage, as column after column moved steadily on to the ground, and halted in its proper place with military exactitude and precision.

‘Look, papa!’ said a gentle voice behind me, in accents of unmistakeable enjoyment—‘here come the 17th Lancers; and there is your old corps, the Artillery, as far as you can see, upon our left. And what is that regiment of dark people coming from behind the trees?’

‘The Rifles, my dear, probably,’ was the reply; ‘but my eyesight is so bad, I cannot make out anything at that distance.’

‘Oh, how I wish somebody would explain to me what they are going to do, I do so love a review!’ said the excited girl.

And thinking it a pity so much military enthusiasm should be thrown away, I was in the act of taking advantage of my official position to furnish the young lady with a programme of the proceedings, when, turning round, I recognised, in the old gentleman of failing vision, a Colonel Belmont, whom I had once met at my father’s house, but of whom I knew very little, except that he was a widower with an only daughter.

‘Can I be of any service to you, Colonel?’ I said. ‘Probably you have forgotten Digby Grand?’

And whilst papa was occupied in shaking hands, cordially expressing his delight at our mutual recognition, and overwhelming me with inquiries about Sir Peregrine, whom he had probably seen long since his undutiful son, I had time to look at the daughter, whose charming voice had first attracted my attention. Heavens! what a beautiful girl she was! Far be it from me, like Olivia, to enter upon an inventory of her charms—‘*item*, two lips, indifferent red, &c.’—but she had the good fortune to possess those violet eyes, with long, black eyelashes, that, with dark hair and a fair complexion, have made a fool of many a wise man since the days of King Solomon. Ere I was presented to her I had seen at a glance that she was *bien gantée* and *bien chaussée*, those two essentials in a lady’s dress; and as she turned her graceful head towards me, and received papa’s introduction with her own sweet smile, I thought I should wish no better amusement than to act cicerone to this fascinating Miss Belmont during the whole of the coming performances.

But the dark massive columns have deployed into line, and, far as the eye can reach, extends a belt of red and white, flanked by the dusky Rifles and grim batteries of artillery; while the lightsome pennons of the Lancers come wheeling rapidly from the rear. All eyes are directed towards Hyde Park Corner, and the crowd are mute with expectation, for a hoarse and indistinct command, reiterated in the front, is fol-

lowed by the flash of steel along the whole line, as a thousand bayonets leap into air, and the brigade 'shoulder arms,' preparatory to receiving, with due respect, the time-honoured hero who is to inspect them. A brilliant and glittering staff winds through the iron gates near Apsley House, and sweeping rapidly into the Park, advances almost to where we are standing, as if expressly to give Miss Belmont an uninterrupted view of the Iron Duke, whom she adores with lady-like devotion. The line opens its ranks, and 'presents arms;' the Commander-in-chief returns the salute, and though he bears a venerable head, white with the snows of eighty winters, the frame below is lithe and hardy, almost as in the prime of life, the heart within game and dauntless as ever. The populace cheer, the band plays 'God save the Queen,' and the tears sparkle in Miss Belmont's eyes.

'How well the old Duke is looking,' says every one, with an affectionate emphasis on the adjective. And then the *habitués*, proud of their better information, instruct their country cousins in the identity of the different notabilities. 'That's Prince George; and there's the Duke of Hessians; and here comes Earl Sabre-tasche—*how* well he rides; and there goes one of the Plantagenets;—what a nice bay horse! and which is the Marquis's *other* leg?' as the finest horseman in England sways his mutilated figure to every motion of the highly-broke charger he bestrides.

And so they run over the whole staff, with a remark for each—delighted beyond measure if a nod of recognition should reach them from any individual of that brilliant *cortège*.

All this time the review is going on, and I have the pleasant task of explaining to Miss Belmont the different manœuvres of the regiments in motion. How they advance in column, covered by skirmishers, as the smart and active riflemen dot the surface of the Park; how they form line with wondrous rapidity ere the smoke created by the artillery has half cleared away. How the cavalry make a brilliant and inexplicable charge, then opening out like some ingenious display of fire-works, retire by wings and are no more seen. How the infantry in the meantime have betaken themselves to the formation of impregnable squares, and having 'prepared to resist cavalry' by creating living fortresses bristling with bayonets, are peppering away to their hearts' content. The only drawback to this striking manœuvre being the critical position of the 120th Foot, who receive and return the combined fire of her Majesty's three regiments of Guards with a gallantry and steadiness that, if ball-cartridges were substituted for blank, would win them undying fame. However, the spectators do not find it out, so it matters but little. And now there is more smoke than ever, and a little *divertissement* by a dismounted aide-de-camp, whose loose horse much distracts the attention of the ladies. When

we have ascertained he is not killed or even hurt, and have time to look about us a little, the line has re-formed, and after a steady advance, commences a series of 'file-firing,' producing, as Miss Belmont observes, very much the effect of running one's finger rapidly down the keys of a piano-forte, and the precision of which is testified by the attitudes of sundry ragamuffins and boys of the looser sort, who, having got within the lines, are now feigning to suffer great loss and slaughter amongst themselves from the efficient aim of the troops, and are lying about the field in every distorted species of pantomimic death. 'Fire a volley,' says the senior in authority. 'Fire a volley,' repeat colonels and majors to their respective regiments and battalions. 'Steady, men,' says the serjeant-major; 'lock up! that rear-rank' (which does *not* imply that one-half the regiment is to be condemned to solitary confinement), and a thundering volley discharges itself, under cover of which the uncompromising bayonet is levelled, and a combined charge executed by the whole line, which looks as if it would sweep general-officers, staff, police, spectators, ladies, and all into Park-lane. Abstaining, however, from so general 'a scrimmage,' they halt and retire in admirable order, covered by cavalry and artillery, and throwing out clouds of skirmishers, till they have reached the same ground and taken up the same positions with which the review commenced.

‘And now, Miss Belmont,’ I explain to my attentive companion, ‘the points are being placed, and the regiments will march past.’

‘Oh, how delightful,’ says the fair enthusiast. ‘And will *your* company march past, Captain Grand? And shall we hear the band? Papa, now you will see the Guards quite close.’

And quite close the imposing columns came; and many an adjutant’s heart leapt for joy as company after company, Guards, Rifles, and infantry of the line, moved steadily past the saluting point, exact as a machine regulated by mechanism, level as a wall of brick. There always appears to me something awful in the uncompromising, unwavering advance of a large body of disciplined men. It is his resolute, unflinching bearing, his steady demeanour, totally uninfluenced by extraneous circumstances—in a word, it is the magic power of discipline that gives the soldier his moral advantage over all the headlong gallantry and numerical superiority of undrilled thousands. And this steadfast reliance on himself, his officers, and his comrades, is only to be acquired by constant mutual practice in the field—practice that must be often repeated on the drill-ground before it can be brought into play under the fire of an enemy. This is the secret of all the marchings and counter-marchings, so often sneered at by the ignorant of military affairs. This is the object of the frequent parades and countless manœuvres that to

the unreflecting appear so unnecessarily to harass the soldier. And all this must be brought to a very high state of perfection before such a 'march past' can be witnessed, as delighted the unpractised eyes of pretty Miss Belmont, and called forth an approving sentence from 'the Duke' himself.

And now, much to my annoyance, the movements of the day are to come to a conclusion. The line, once more formed, advances in open order to the music of the three finest bands in the service, and again 'present arms' as a sort of farewell to the illustrious hero. A few words of approbation addressed by him to the respective colonels are soon made known to the officers and privates of the different troops and companies: and I am compelled to bid Miss Belmont farewell; not, however, before I have discovered her whereabouts in London: and collecting my dispersed party together, I march them back towards the barracks under the wing of the battalion to which they belong.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

AS I willingly exchanged the oppressive confinement of a uniform for the cooler habiliments usually worn in London during the summer, I found upon my table, amongst a whole heap of unanswered letters, unpaid bills, gloves, cigars, and all the miscellaneous litter of a bachelor's abode, a small rose-tinted note, written in the palest ink, indited by the white hand of Mrs. Man-trap.

'Confound the woman!—what can she mean by all these dashes?' I thought, as I opened and read the following emphatic missive.

'— Street, Saturday.

'DEAR CAPTAIN GRAND,—If *not* too much *fatigued* by your MILITARY DUTIES, shall you be at Lady Cockle's *to-day*? I am MOST ANXIOUS to *see* you, and shall *go* EARLY. If you are not *here in time* for me to *take you down*, I can, at all events, BRING YOU BACK. I shall be *enchanted* to hear ALL the particulars of the *review*. Yours, ever,

MARGERY MAN-TRAP.'

This was a fair specimen of Mrs. Man-trap's usual

style of correspondence; but why she should suppose that she rendered her sentences more intelligible by underlining every second word I am at a loss to conjecture. Of one thing, however, I was certain, that the volley of inquiries concerning our field-day would be unbearable under a hot sun, and I therefore determined to drive my own high-stepping grey cab-horse quietly down to Lady Cockle's, and trust to chance for making my excuses. The fact was, I never felt so tired of Mrs. Man-trap as on that morning. Fresh from the society of my new acquaintance, the charming Miss Belmont—the recollection of the *maniérée* woman of the world was thoroughly distasteful; and yet but a few short days ago it was the height of my ambition to be an especial favourite with the latter. There was a degree of *éclat* in certain circles conferred by her preference that was very fascinating to my vain imagination; and in the absence of Zoë, and the uncertainty of my relations with Coralie, I had almost fancied that I was a little in love with a woman old enough to be my mother. And now a newer idol had driven the images of all these from my mind. Even poor Zoë I could scarce bear to think of; and it was with a bitter feeling of shame that I was obliged to confess such a heart as mine was not worth having—'unstable as water,' and fickle as a leaf upon the breeze. But, in the meantime, I dressed as carefully as twenty ever thinks it necessary to adorn itself,—and armed

at all points, found myself a well-satisfied item of a fashionable throng, enjoying the bright sunshine of the summer afternoon on Lady Cockle's smoothly shaven lawn.

There were all the usual ingredients of a 'breakfast' in the vicinity of London. There were flowers to look at, and shady walks to flirt in; there were glee-singers concealed in a shrubbery, and bloated gold-fish in a pond; there was plenty to eat and drink, and much too few chairs to sit down upon; in fact, good-humoured, gouty Sir Harlequin Hautboy whispered to me, looking ruefully down the while at a pair of tiny white brodequins which imprisoned his venerable feet, 'that he should go and sit in the carriage till his daughters were ready to come away'—in short, there was all and everything necessary to make the breakfast go off to the satisfaction of every one concerned; and even Mrs. Man-trap, whom I soon discovered sitting in a striking attitude and a commanding position, allowed that it was all very pretty and well done. As I bowed my way up to that irresistible lady, I could not help being struck with the contrast which forcibly presented itself between my new flame of the morning and the well-known coquetteries of her to whom I was now to render homage. What a difference between the artless grace and unconscious charms of Miss Belmont, and the studied attitudes, flounced and furbelowed dress, and *créped* ringlets of Mrs. Man-trap! Beau-

tiful she certainly was, though no longer young ; but even her most devoted admirers must allow that she would have looked better had that fair hair been suffered to droop in natural curls, and not been frizzed out and tortured into a species of glory round her head. With her rouge we will not quarrel, as it was but a *souçon*, and made her eyes sparkle with a brilliancy all her own ; but why, with a really well-turned and fully-rounded figure, did she think it necessary to disguise its proportions in such a voluminous multiplicity of starch and draperies, as might have defied the most experienced dressmaker, and skilful anatomist to boot, to distinguish the actual from the ideal, the real from the illusive ?

‘How badly you have behaved, Grand,’ she began, stretching out to me the prettiest little white-gloved hand, surmounted by a puffed out cloud of muslin, and adorned with a gold chain and locket, containing Mr. Man-trap’s hair, a piece of sentiment the more creditable, as their separation, *a mensâ et thoro*, had long since relieved the tedious routine of business in the House of Lords—‘shamefully : you haven’t been near me for two whole days, and I wanted to ask you the rights of this business about young Swindle and the Jockey Club, and whether you had seen the carriage St. Heliers has ordered for Rivolte?’

These were two home-thrusts, as in Mr. Swindle’s business I had taken a strong part, which was likely to give me a good deal of trouble ; and when Coralie’s

name was mentioned, a mingled feeling of anxiety and regard for the pretty *danseuse* made me almost commit the indecency of blushing.

But the worst of Mrs. Man-trap was, that she had a cool *naïve* way of asking impertinent questions, and making remarks upon the subject nearest one's heart, as if one's private feelings were of no earthly consideration whatever. I strove to answer her, nevertheless, with a carelessness equal to her own, and thinking I had really been somewhat inattentive of late, I tried to make amends by doing the agreeable to the best of my abilities. In all affairs of flirtation, I have invariably found that *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, and in that, as in many other situations of life, if not going 'too fast to be pleasant,' we often find ourselves 'going too fast to be safe.' We were soon as good friends as ever, and were rapidly arriving at that indefinite boundary where friendship ceases and a warmer relation begins. As usual, I thought only of the present, and adopting St. Heliers' maxim, 'never to look forward beyond dinner-time,' I cut out for myself a very pleasant afternoon of gossip and love-making with Mrs. Man-trap, varied by observations and scandal of our neighbours, tea and strawberries and cream for ourselves. What cared I, that ninety-nine out of one hundred most intimate friends were good-naturedly remarking, 'what a fool that boy makes of himself, with a woman twice his age!' or, 'I see Mrs. Man-trap has

got hold of that unfortunate young Grand !' These observations were not addressed to us ; on the contrary, people rather refrained from interrupting our *tête-à-tête*, and civilly got out of our way as much as possible. So I plied my fair companion with compliments and flattery, and, what she liked nearly as well, fed her insatiable appetite for news : we arranged a pic-nic ; talked about a joint excursion to Cowes ; voted, almost in plain terms, that we were very unhappy when separated, and agreed to ride together regularly every day at five ; in short, we were getting on at railroad pace, and Heaven only knows where our journey would have terminated, had I not been suddenly arrested in my most emphatic assurances by the drowsy voice of good Colonel Belmont, impressing upon another elderly gentleman, in a buff waistcoat, that 'turnips might be grown the size of his head on light land, or red land, or some other kind of land, by applying a certain compost made of sundry costly articles, but which must pay in the long run, as had been proved by a millionaire on an experimental farm.' The elderly gentleman, to his shame be it said, was no agriculturist, and looked as if he did not much care whether the turnips paid or not ; but a noble duke, who overheard the conversation, and who was heart and soul interested in the cultivation of the soil, was soon at close quarters with the Colonel, and walked him off before I had time to see whether or not he

was accompanied by his pretty daughter. I need not say that I recognised the good Colonel's drawling tones in an instant, and had some difficulty in concealing from my companion the anxiety I experienced to ascertain if he had come (which was very unlikely) to the breakfast on his own account.

'Do you know Colonel Belmont or his daughter?' said Mrs. Man-trap, with an intuitive perception of what was going on in my mind.

I stammered out, 'No—yes—that is, I have been introduced to *her*.'

'He's a dreadful old bore, but she's a nice-looking, unmeaning sort of girl,' was the careless reply; yet a settled flush on her cheek-bones, lowering through the rouge, with a contracted smile about her mouth, showed that the speaker was ill at ease.

I was now, however, so eager to discover Miss Belmont, that I felt no scruples in leaving Mrs. Man-trap to the tender care of a gouty peer, who was by way of paying her great attention when he had nothing better to do, and, cursing my own stupidity in not having thought of asking the fair Flora whether she was going to the breakfast before I parted with her at the review, I hunted all over the gardens, like a shepherd in French polish who had lost his love.

What a difference does it make in ball, breakfast, or party, whether we go there simply with the somewhat hopeless intention of being amused, or whether

we have 'an object,' to which all the lights, ornaments, music, crowds, champagne, and dancing, are merely accessories. Elderly gentlemen, depend upon it, you have the best of it. The lot of woman has ever been to fidget, and when she has done being uncomfortable about herself, there is but a short interval ere it is time to be uncomfortable about her daughters; but you, respected head of a fine family!—you, portly and port-wine drinking patriarch! what have you to do when, to your astonishment, you find yourself at a *fête*, but to stick your hands in your pockets, and, hob-nobbing with your old cronies, enjoy yourself to the utmost? What care you that Maria's hair has come out of curl, and Mr. Jilt has never so much as asked Jane to dance? You leave these matters in perfect confidence to your energetic lady, whilst you discuss last night's division and the ever-present ministerial crisis. Now look at your son Augustus; 'tis true that his form is graceful and his step is light, his hair is glossy and his whiskers curled. He is the image, so you think, with retrospective flattery, of what you were at his age, and for an instant you sigh to think how long that is ago. But could you peep behind the embroidered shirt-front that covers his manly chest—could you lay bare the secrets of his bosom, you would not envy son Augustus. He came to the ball on purpose to meet Miss Eglantine, and she is waltzing for the second time with Lord Haycock, and has not vouchsafed poor

Augustus a word. His ambition (at his time of life) is to be in a good set, and to know all the great people. Alas! Lady Overbearing, whose carriage he calls like a town-crier, and whom, in such difficulties, he attends like a running footman, has even now passed him without a nod. Painfully alive to ridicule, poor lad, Mr. Sneersby has just complimented him, ironically, upon his hack; and with all these mingled annoyances, and a variety of outstanding unpaid bills, of which, as yet, you know nothing, (but take comfort, *your* time will come upon that point)—can you lay your hand upon your heart and say that you would exchange your half-century of experience, and the comfortable mental repose which it has brought, for the hollow excitement and craving restlessness of incipient manhood?

Here was I, in the first bloom of youth, and the good spirits which accompany that unreflecting age, with health, position, not money, but credit, which did equally well, and everything else to make life enjoyable, and yet I doubt if a more restless, discontented spirit ever walked the earth than was mine on that sunny afternoon whilst searching for Miss Belmont; and then when I did find her, and took her into a crush-room to drink weak tea, and then prevailed on her to accompany me down a shady walk to inspect certain camelias, of which I hardly knew the names, did I not, in that very peaceful alley, come face to face with Mrs. Man-trap, of all

people in the world, who gave me a look that said, as plainly as look could speak,—‘Aha, young gentleman! so I have caught you out at last; but I will put a spoke in your wheel, take my word for it.’ And well did she redeem that prophetic pledge in after days. It must have been an instinctive feeling of well-grounded horror that made Miss Belmont shrink involuntarily from her, and ask me ‘who that bold-looking lady was?’ ’Tis in vain to recapitulate the feelings crowded into such an afternoon as that. If there is a turning-point in the career of every man, when his good and evil destinies are balanced to a hair, and his future fate is determined by some trifling circumstance, too insignificant to mention, surely that sunny evening that saw me wander through those fragrant shrubberies with Flora Belmont had an influence on my later life, at times almost imperceptible—at times the only redeeming point in a character otherwise steeped in sin.

Need I say that Mrs. Man-trap’s barouche was innocent of my weight as it rolled back to town. I was in one of those moods when solitude and reflection are our greatest luxuries. A new life was dawning upon me. I found myself shrinking with disgust from the associates and the amusements which yesterday had appeared so delightful. I looked into futurity, and pictured a happy home, blessed by the presence of such a one as her from whom I had so lately parted. I saw myself descending on the stream

of time, a wiser and a better man, living in the country, ministering to the wants of the poor, happy and respected. Then a momentary twinge came across me, as I recollected that one of the indispensable attributes of respectability was the payment of one's debts; and here, I must confess, I did not see my way very clearly; but without dwelling too long upon that point, I pursued my day-dream, shutting my eyes to its disagreeables, and was in the midst of a fairy vision of Haverley Hall, with a young and beautiful mistress, a weekly soup-kitchen, a Christmas gathering of friends and relations, and a life of calm rational, domestic enjoyment.

I had got thus far, and had just carried in the affirmative a knotty point I was debating in my own mind, as to whether I should keep a pack of fox-hounds, when a dainty umbrella, thrust into my horse's face, arrested our progress, and dissolved my castles in the air at the same instant, while Hillingdon's well-known voice shouted out my name, as he picked his way across Piccadilly into St. James's-street.

'Lucky that grey horse is only blind of one eye, Digby, or I should have been a case for the hospitals, to a certainty,' said my friend, whom I had all but run over; and interrupting my vehement defence of my cab-horse's eye-sight, an aspersion I was not inclined to give in to, by assuring me I looked savage and hungry, he proposed that we should dine to-

gether at Crockford's in half-an-hour, and, if not too late for the ballet, go from thence to the opera. What could I do?—the gastric juices of a boy who has just done growing are clamorous in the extreme about eight o'clock. I was not engaged to dine anywhere else; I had no home but the clubs,—a home, by the way, much appreciated by sundry middle-aged gentlemen who ought to know better,—and, though I do not excuse myself for the inconsistency, I merely state the simple fact, that the upshot of all my good resolutions and virtuous schemes for the future was my sitting unusually long after dinner with St. Heliers, and sundry other choice spirits who joined our party, and losing five hundred 'upstairs' before I went to bed.

In making these confessions, I may as well state, once for all, that I do not seek to conceal, far less to palliate, the follies and vices into which I, and such as I, unhesitatingly plunged. Conscious of my own defects, I am aware that many young men enter the world under far worse auspices than were mine, and come out of that searching ordeal pure and unscathed; but I greatly fear that these, if not exceptions, are at least only a minority; that mine was by no means an unusual case; and if such be the truth, may I venture to hope that the simple relation of facts and feelings, the plain unvarnished recital of each step in the downward course, each circumstance in the moral perversion of a man born and

bred a gentleman, and entering life through one of her fairest and most promising portals, may serve as a warning and a beacon to those who are themselves aware of their instability when exposed to temptation—their organic incapability of saying ‘No!’

How often do we see a youth, and more particularly the younger sons of the nobility, thrust upon the world in the falsest of all false positions—placed in a station which he has not the means of keeping up, and moving in a sphere whose necessary expenses must eventually entail ruin upon him. He has probably been educated at Eton or Harrow, with his brother the marquis, and when he came home for the holidays, either because he was mamma’s pet, or because he was better-looking or cleverer than the peer presumptive, he found himself in every respect quite as important a personage as his elder brother. He rode as good a pony, and rode him a turn harder; was put into as ‘warm a corner’ by the keeper at his grace’s lordly battues, and was in every respect on the same footing. So far so good; it would be hard to make a distinction between boys, and it might, perhaps, be as bad for the elder as it would be wholesome preparatory training for the younger. But ere long the jacket is discarded for a tailed-coat, and there is a question of razors and a dressing-case. Then comes Oxford or Cambridge, and still the young one holds his senior a neck-and-neck race; they are both ‘tufts,’ and, as far as income goes, very much

on a par, as they each run into debt pretty handsomely, as a matter of course, which debts the duke, though not as a matter of course, pays. And now comes the tug of war,—now the younger lordling enters upon the world, armed indeed, generally speaking, with a frontlet of brass, but woefully deficient in the more valuable metal he has all his life been learning to squander so freely. ‘Lord of his presence and small land beside,’ his rank gives him an entrance into the gayest, the highest—what is called the best society, which his previous habits teach him to enjoy and appreciate. Pleasure is for a time a willing handmaid, and the butterfly frolics gaudily in the sun; but, unfortunately, a day of reckoning must come; the longest suffering tradesmen like to be paid once in three years, and a creditor too often put off becomes at each postponement a more pitiless enemy. Our scion of nobility, like the child of toil, must be clothed and fed; but what would be luxuries to the million are to him the necessaries of life. It is as indispensable for him to be well dressed as it is for a man of middle station to be dressed at all; and although he may feed at the mahogany, and repose on the mattresses, of another, yet he and his valet must move from Castle to Hall, and posting is proverbially only to be effected by means of ready money.

Then, must he give up hunting, to which he has all his life been accustomed, because, forsooth, he

cannot keep horses?—brought up with the Racing Calendar and Stud Book at his fingers' ends, must he abjure the bracing heath and the velvet sward, over which he loves to see the favourite skimming like an arrow? Must he be poisoned with rough, loaded port, to whom the clean and silky Chateau-Margaux is as mother's milk?—or must he starve upon roast mutton, whose appetite has been hitherto appeased with *salmi de becasses*? No; you cannot break through the habits of a lifetime with an effort: you cannot reclaim the eagle whose untamed youth has matured in his lofty eyrie, and lure him to your fist like a sparrow-hawk; neither can you expect that the young patrician, whose boyhood has been undisciplined and uncontrolled, shall suddenly assume with manhood those principles and habits which it cost years of self-denial to acquire. He will go on as he has begun, and when hopelessly involved and irretrievably ruined, it will be well if he confine himself to preying upon the unoffending tradesman, and do not carry his depredations into the class of society to which he belongs.

We are apt to attach a certain degree of credit to the expression, 'living by one's wits,' and rather respect the individual who so exists as being a very clever fellow; but if we consider for one moment to what especial profession we apply the term, we shall esteem it a less enviable distinction. What is the man who lives by his wits, in fact, but one who

trades upon the want of those essentials in another? —who makes use of his own greater dexterity, better information, or more favourable luck, to fill his pockets at the expense of his friends and associates? who loses no opportunity of getting the better of the very man whose roof shelters him, and whose bread he eats? And is this a worthy occupation for the well-born scion of a long line of chivalrous ancestors? —is this a fitting station for one in whose veins the pure old Norman blood courses unstained? When the mailed grasp of his warlike sire closed but upon the knightly lance, shall his degenerate fingers wield only the covetous pencil of a betting-book? Shall the noble steed, the generous auxiliary, the very source of the old champion's fame, be to his descendant but an unconscious machine of fraud and disgrace? And yet to such shifts as these may be driven the noblest of the land, by a bad education and the exigencies of a false position.

I have only stated the facts of the case as they may have come under the observation of most of us. Let wiser heads than mine propose the remedy.

But to return to Flora, as I now found myself calling her in my day-dreams, the attachment, sprung up amidst the noise and turmoil of the review, grew and flourished even in the worldly atmosphere of a London season. I avoided Mrs. Man-trap; I made no further inquiries as to Coralie, and the first time I saw her again, pirouetting as a sylphide in her voca-

tion, she studiously avoided looking towards my box, and showed no inclination to renew our strange acquaintanceship. I went less to Crockford's, and when there, shunned the little room ; and I dined a good deal at Colonel Belmont's, whose cook would have completely destroyed the *stomach* of any man whose *heart* was unaffected. I took to morning-walks in Kensington Gardens, where quite incidentally I used to come across Miss Belmont, promenading under the guardianship of a particularly grim personage, who, having been her nurse in childhood, now acted as waiting-maid and local *duenna* to my ladye-love. These were very pleasant walks, and I often look back to that peaceful time as a sort of smiling oasis in the waste of my reckless and tempestuous life. People may sneer at the cockney-beauties of Kensington Gardens, but for my part, I love those trim alleys and long deep glades as well as anything I have met with further a-field ; and were it not that the stems of the fine old trees become so engrained and blackened with soot, you might fancy, in the heart of that sylvan scenery, that you were hundreds of miles from London. The sun does not shine now-a-days as it used to shine upon those early strolls ; and then, when the world's *morning* began about half-past five, P.M., we were wont to meet again ; for it was a time-honoured custom with the kind old Colonel to take his darling out for a ride in the park regularly as the afternoon came

round ; and being, partly from absence of mind, and partly from short-sightedness, a most inefficient guardian, I always received a hearty welcome from papa, as an additional escort. Need I say the welcome, though not so loudly expressed, was as warmly murmured from the lips of the daughter. The rides were nearly as delightful as the walks, for Flora looked unspeakably lovely in a riding-habit, and being a somewhat timid equestrian, required all the attentions and assistances which it was my delight to lavish. Many men are wonderfully susceptible to beauty on horseback, and are completely captivated by the skilful equitation of the woman they admire ; but I confess to a partiality for the less daring fair one, whose characteristic helplessness and dependence on man are more agreeably manifested when she leans towards him for support and encouragement, than when she kicks the dirt up in his face, as she tears along before him, in all the triumph of holding a thorough-bred one, that its lord and master is unable to ride, but that carries her, with her light and gentle hand, quietly enough.

I have seen women mounted and accoutred at the covert-side, as if they meant *business*, eager and excited as the very huntsman himself, when the shaking gorse re-echoed to the crash of the pack. I have seen them, though not many, sitting steadily down in their saddles, as they got away alongside of

the leading hounds, skim the pastures, and flit over the fences, like birds upon the wing ; and there have been instances of the weaker sex winning the honour of 'going best,' through a run from 'find to finish,' and 'cutting down,' from sheer nerve and determination, the bearded sons of Nimrod themselves. But I confess that I was never prone to be captivated by prowess such as this ; and have even had the bad taste to think that these heroines would have been infinitely more fascinating sitting at home, with their feet upon the fender and perpetrating worsted-work, aye, even although it should entail the very counting of the stitches themselves.

No Diana of the Ephesians was Flora. She possessed a bay mare that she thought and believed perfection, for whose prowess she entertained the greatest respect and admiration, not unmingled with fear ; and, truth to say, the bay-mare was a good-looking animal enough, and with her mistress on her back, completed a very charming pair ; and alongside of this bay mare it was my greatest pleasure to saunter, regardless of the good Colonel, who occupied the other flank, and who was sure to pick up some old friend or companion in arms, with whom he interchanged a considerable amount of twaddle, whilst Flora and I rode on in that sweet communion of kindred spirits, which is even more delightful, when tempered with a degree of doubt and uncertainty, than when the fatal words, once spoken, have

given to the relation existing between the twain a decided character and a name.

'There is that horrid woman again,' would Flora say to me, as we paced up and down the crowded 'ride,' and in each oft-repeated turn encountered the rounded form of Mrs. Man-trap, on her showy steed. 'What makes her stare so?' would add my gentle companion, as the bold eyes and saucy smile would greet me with a meaning nod. I felt instinctively, I know not why, that I had made an enemy, and ever after, receiving and returning the salute of my *ci-devant* goddess, I felt a creeping sensation of impending evil that was unaccountable as it seemed absurd.

Gradually, as these rides went on, and I became a more and more familiar guest at the house of Colonel Belmont, I found myself relapsing in society into the grade of an 'engaged man,' and consequently, of less and less account amongst the ball-giving dames and ball-going damsels of my acquaintance. People began to nod to me with a meaning smile; and one or two intimate friends of my own had already (the profane and confirmed bachelors!) 'hoped it wasn't true,' and begged to know when I was to be 'turned off.' And yet I had never spoken a word that could be construed into a proposal by Miss Belmont, or hinted my intentions to the good old Colonel. However, I had thought a good deal about it myself, and had made up my mind that it

was absolutely essential for Flora's happiness as for mine, that we should spend the rest of our lives together as man and wife ; this infatuation being the more confirmed by my own restlessness and discomfort, when the illness of a near relative occasioned the temporary absence of the Belmonts from London. I began seriously to think of rushing into matrimony, and withdrawing myself from all the dissipations and follies of the world ; for which I deserved the less credit, as the London season was now rapidly dwindling to its close. I took to leading a rational and manly kind of life, depending upon my brother officers for society, and entering ardently into all those vigorous sports and athletic exercises so popular with the young officers of ' the brigade.'

It was our greatest delight on those fine summer mornings to rush down to the margin of dirty and venerable Father Thames, and, embarking in a four-oar, dash merrily up the river to breakfast, in the time-honoured parlour of the Red House,—an edifice now, alas ! to be swept away by the unsparing march of modern improvement. No more shall the jovial crew, leaping from their shallop, rush headlong to the charge, and demolish a breakfast, such as those alone dare to face whose appetites are sharpened by the keen healthy morning air, and digestions fortified by the vigour of an oarsman's condition. No more shall the cool and unerring shot level his deadly tubes, as he quietly lays five to two upon the gun,

and ere the 'blue rock,' swiftest of the children of air, rises three feet from the opening trap, mows him down upon the sward with a rapidity and precision that deserve to win, as win he does, a golden victory. No more shall Messrs. Pitcher and Wing shoot off their ties with Captain Rocket and Major Snap, and decide within these echoing lists who shall claim the honour of being the best shot in England. No, the place must go to make room for a new park, that the increasing population of our wonderful metropolis may have a space wherein to breathe themselves when released from toil; and much as we may regret the loss, we cannot cavil at the object. We can only say, 'we could have better spared a better house.' But in the palmy days of that waterman's resort we made the most of it indeed. Morning after morning might be seen our four-oar, with or against tide, shooting over the muddy waters on its upward voyage through the mimic waves of a passing steamer, that caught the tossing blade of the oar, which, unless dexterously feathered, enforced upon the novice the disgrace of 'catching a crab.'

'Give way! my lads,' says Maltby, as he bends his stalwart back to the stroke, and times each dip of his oar with the regularity of a pendulum, while the sharp-nosed craft springs forward like a race-horse to the spur—'Give way!' and we dash under Westminster Bridge, with its grim yawning arches, and massive stone buttresses, by which the tide

always appears to be rushing so furiously—‘Give way!’ and we speed past the New Houses of Parliament’ seen only to real advantage from the river, and now shining gorgeously beautiful in the warmth of the rising sun—‘Give way!’ and our lungs respire more freely, as the perspiration starts from our brows, and we swing gallantly along by the dull frowning walls of what the watermen call ‘the Plenipotentiary on Millbanke’—‘Give way!’ the Red House looms in sight, and the bow-oar is discovered turning his head round to look for the promised haven, and reprovèd accordingly—‘Give way!’ for a hundred more of these long, vigorous, and well-timed strokes will take us across the river to where breakfast is even now being prepared—‘Give way!’ for even as the jockey finishes his race with a rush, even as the post-boy *boils up* the gallop he has reserved for ‘the avenue,’ even so does it behove the well-trained crew to throw the whole vigour of their stalwart shoulders and lithe, athletic forms into those concluding efforts that are to shoot their quivering bark to the shore and, as Jack Emery, the best of fellows and most skilled of watermen, calls it, ‘bring her in handsome.’ Willingly do we bend to the task, and just as we are speeding along at our best, and are thinking, some of us, that lungs and muscle will not last for ever, the welcome ‘easy’ poises every oar above the surface, as though arrested in mid-stroke by a charm, ‘and rowed of all’ is followed by the

rattling of the thole-pins, and the immediate loosening of every tongue, that has hitherto been too short of breath to speak, as our long taper oars are shipped, and our fairy keel grates against the shingle of the destined port. Out jumps the bow-oar armed with a boat-hook, and, bold as Captain Cook amongst the savages, and leaving our careful waterman to secure the boat, we rush tumultuously in to breakfast.

With constant practice, under the able tuition of the 'professional' above-mentioned, we formed no despicable crew, for amateurs, at that time. Maltby, who was always present with his regiment during the summer, in order that his leave might commence in November, a month whose saddened hues and leafless copses were far dearer to the enthusiastic fox-hunter than all the luxuriance of glorious June—Maltby took the office of 'stroke,' and acquitted himself as so keen a spirit and stalwart a frame were likely to do in that responsible situation. Hillingdon, with his calm, pale face, his lithe frame, and indomitable pluck, pulled No. 2. My duty was to labour like a galley-slave, with straining sinews and grinning countenance, at No. 3; whilst Tom Tuft, a pocket Hercules in frame, a dismounted Bacchus in habits, wielded the bow-oar and flourished the boat-hook with a vigour and a quaintness all his own.

Such a crew, in such training, were no unworthy foes even for the top-sawyers of the Goosander Club;

and as it would have been a sad pity that so much energy and condition should be thrown away, articles were entered into, at my instigation, that we should make a match with a certain chosen four of that aquatic body, to enliven the dull season of an autumn in London, and furnish food for the columns of the weekly sporting journals. My old habits were sufficiently strong within me to induce me to get, by every means in my power, the best information as to the pace of our antagonists, and the 'time' in which they did their several distances; on comparing which with our own, it appeared to me that there was money to be made out of the proceedings, and that if we could only keep Tom Tuft from the decanters and the beer-barrel, we ought to make a pretty good certainty of winning. After a great deal of discussion, called by the vulgar 'chaff,' time, place, and distance were arranged, and our respective crews having decided upon the colours of their Jerseys, and the capabilities of their steerers, went into strong training forthwith. I cannot answer for the diet prescribed to them, or the particular regimen adopted by Messrs. Ruffles, Mallerd, Stretcher, and Bowes, our four laborious adversaries, but I can only bear witness to the perseverance with which our own crew discussed raw mutton-chops and porter at each period when exhausted nature required refreshment. I have ever since loathed the taste of beer, and appreciated most heartily the scientific transformations of a

skilful cook. Day after day we fed like cannibals, and worked like Helots. Day after day, the skin got clearer, the muscles harder, and the face thinner, till at last we boasted that we were not to be 'blown' by pace or exhausted by labour. Once only Tom Tuft was granted a dispensation from the severity of our rules, and allowed to dine out with an aunt in Eaton-square, whom it would have been impolitic to offend. But the aunt possessed a store of a certain dry old port, and by cross-examination of her butler, an office I took upon myself, I discovered that Master Thomas had drunk thereof two whole bottles to his own cheek during the very short interval that he was left alone in the dining-room, whilst coffee was being prepared up-stairs. We allowed no more dinner engagements till the match was over, and our jovial 'bow' was obliged to console himself for present abstinence by anticipating the glorious jollification with which he was confident of celebrating our coming victory. As the time for the match drew nearer, so did the weather become more and more unpropitious, till the eventful day itself arrived, heralded by a continual downfall of rain that, if St. Swithin had anything to do with it, must have truly gladdened the heart of that lachrymose worthy. First of all, we thought it was sure to clear at noon, and when noon came, the rain descended in straighter lines than ever; then we voted, as we shivered in the damp, dull atmosphere, it would be far pleasanter to

pull in the cool of the evening, and the weather must improve by that time. Then we had to look at the style of the other crew, as they came down with the tide in a preparatory breather—Maltby thinking it better to reserve his own forces entirely for the struggle. It was the lougest and most unsettled day I ever spent, and I felt quite rejoiced when, at seven in the evening, the weather still clouded and drizzling, I found myself seated in my own place in the boat, arranging my stretcher, and preparing for the coming tug of war.

It was seven o'clock ere the preliminaries were fairly arranged, the judge appointed, and the umpires placed. The dulness of the weather prevented our being honoured with a large quantity of spectators, at which we were as well pleased, and the river for once was clearer of craft than usual. Like a race-horse taking his canter, ere he engages in the strife of speed, we shot away for a half-mile 'spurt,' to get thoroughly into our swing, before the real contest should commence; and when we felt our muscles elastic and our lungs clear, we wheeled the long narrow boat into its appointed place, and, with beating hearts and quivering limbs, sat watching eagerly for the start. The signal shot is fired—and we are off! From that moment, till, with bent and aching back, with numbed arms, and dripping brow, I staggered on to *terra firma*, and knew by the congratulations of my friends that we had won a severely

contested race by a length, I have but a vague recollection of the events of the match: it is all confused and misty as the dim perceptions of a dream. There was the shooting rush of our keel and the ripple of the water in our wake, keeping melodious time to the roll of the oars, as they feathered regularly in their rullocks; sounds echoed indistinctly from the adversary, which, like some phantom-boat, still hovered near,—now alongside, now on our track, now drawing slightly in advance;—there was the steersman's eager face peering at times over Maltby's shoulder, as he bent to and fro with every jerk of the dancing craft, as though he too were helping her along;—there were the swelling muscles of Maltby's back and shoulders, rising and falling, as our stalwart captain bent gallantly to his oar;—there was the hot breath of the calm and indomitable Hillingdon fanning my bare neck at regular intervals, as he laid his lengthy frame well forward to the sweeping stroke;—there was my own blood boiling with labour and excitement, and the indescribable exhilaration of spirits, arising from severe muscular exertion and the unfailing determination to die rather than give in. Once and once only I was able to steal a look at the other boat: it was towards the close of the contest, and we were slightly ahead. There was but one word spoken by any of our crew, and its effect was electrical. 'Now!' said Maltby, as with redoubled vigour he strained to the task!—

'Now!' gasped Hillingdon, behind me, in a sepulchral whisper through his grinding teeth—and 'Now!' I repeated, as, with desperate energy, I tugged at my resisting oar. The monosyllable did it!—I know not how or when, but having pulled as I never pulled before, and hope never to pull again, having outlasted by sheer 'condition' the unfair tax upon nature which such efforts demand, I had the satisfaction of knowing that, after a severe and well-contested struggle, we beat our adversaries on the goal by a short boat's length.

Let me draw a veil over the triumph, and the dinner, composed of both crews, which celebrated it. Tom Tuft took the chair, and however many bottles he owed himself for his abstinence and self-denial, I think he must have paid them all up.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SHOOTING PARTY.

IT was now about the middle of August, and the excitement of our boat-race being over, London began to get insufferably hot, dusty, and stupid: everybody had left town, and the very waiters in the clubs were looking forward to their little excursion to the sea-side. St. Heliers had been absent on the Continent for the last six weeks, and was the person I should have least expected to meet, when, to my surprise, one hot and languid afternoon, as I sauntered listlessly down St. James's-street, I discovered that the only other individual occupying the pavement of that once-crowded resort was St. Heliers himself—*en route*, as he immediately informed me, for the best moor and the most comfortable shooting-lodge in the north of Scotland; 'where, Digby, my boy,' added the good-natured peer, 'if you will come down with me, I shall be happy to give you lots of grouse, an occasional deer, and a good deal of that old claret you so highly approve.' I jumped at the offer, and having with little difficulty obtained suffi-

cient leave from my military duties, that very night saw me, in company with my noble host, occupying a *coupée* of the London and North Western Railway, and, in defiance of directors' bye-laws, and forty-shilling penalties, filling it with the fumes of the choicest and most fragrant of cigars. And now, I think, I cannot illustrate St. Heliers' views upon men and things, including women, better than by detailing a conversation which took place between us, as we sped along northward at the rate of forty miles an hour, and which he opened by an observation on what he called the 'mistaken notion' of marrying at my time of life. 'What is this I hear, Digby,' said he, between the puffs of his cigar, 'about you and Miss Belmont? Of course you don't mean to marry her?'

'Well,' I replied, 'I certainly did think of it. But why not?'

'Why not!—why should you? Has she a very large fortune?'

'Not a sixpence, I believe, during her father's life,' I answered; 'but, of course, if I married, I should sell out, and go and live very quietly somewhere in the country.'

St. Heliers' face, at this proposal, would have been a picture. 'Have you considered how badly such a life would suit you?' he said, with more earnestness than he usually showed in any matters not bearing directly on *himself*: 'have you considered how very

much disgusted you would be before two years had elapsed? Of course it is no business of mine, and I never like to bore people by giving them advice, but when I see an agreeable, pleasant fellow making, with his eyes shut, for the brink of a precipice, I cannot, in common charity, refrain from asking him if he knows where he is going.'

'Well,' I interposed, 'but I do not see the irrevocable step quite in that light.'

'That is because you do not in the least know what you are going to undertake. Trust me, I have seen a great deal of life, my dear Digby, and, for a fellow like you, marriage, on a small income, would be worse than transportation. You like to come and dine with me, for instance, because I have a really good cook, and you meet a pleasant party, with whom you have lots of fun. Are you prepared to sit down *every day*, mind you, to a bad dinner, with the same individual, whatever may have occurred to damp the spirits or ruffle the good humour of that constant *tête-à-tête* companion? You hate being bothered about trifles, and looking into any items of expense—how shall you like to have to speak to the butcher about the mutton being too fat, and add up the grocer's book with a ready-reckoner, to find out whether he has overcharged you for your tea? I conclude you are fond of what the lower orders call a day's pleasuring, as you are constant even at Hampton, and never miss a Derby,—but how will it do to exchange Lavish's


drag and the jollity of luncheon on the course, for a drive in an open carriage in all weathers as far as the turnpike and back, more particularly if Mrs. Grand should happen to be nervous, and, what is no unusual effect, becomes cross when she is frightened? I pass over all the minor annoyances, of squalling children (instead of the opera, at which I happen to know you are a pretty constant attendant), squabbling servants, smoky chimneys, windows that let the water run through them, and drains that do *not*; neither will I dwell upon the petty details of what housekeepers call 'sundries,' such as mops, brooms, toothpicks, soap, soda, and sand-paper, all of which somebody must look into; but I will only ask you, calmly and dispassionately, to reflect for an instant on the galling restraint, the intolerable discomfort it would be to a man of your habits and pursuits, to be obliged to maintain a respectability of demeanour and to behave himself with propriety on all occasions.'

The gravity with which my monitor propounded this last objection, as if it were indeed a poser, was too much for both of us, and bursts of laughter prevented the possibility of our carrying on the conversation with the seriousness the subject demanded: but as I drew my travelling-cap over my brows, and composed myself to sleep in my corner, I could not help thinking how thoroughly the man of the world had exposed his own character, his own intense

regard for self, in the matrimonial lecture with which, in really intended kindness, he treated me. I saw what he meant: I knew there was a great deal to be given up,—that if, in my position, I chose to marry, I must forego luxuries, and do without excitement; of all this I was aware, and fully conscious that the sacrifice might cost me many a sigh; but still, I thought, there are many pleasures enjoyed by those who live for others rather than themselves, of which I am as yet wholly ignorant. Man is not intended to exert all his highest energies for his own gratification,—the reflected happiness of another should be the greatest happiness to ourselves, and we increase our sources of enjoyment as we increase our responsibilities. With all his wit, all his plausible arguments and unsparing ridicule, my better nature told me that St. Heliers was wrong. And yet—and yet, I pondered and hesitated, marriage was a serious undertaking; I would put it off a little; the present, as usual, was my first object. I had a delightful six weeks of sport to anticipate, and, as many a wiser man has done on a far more important subject, I shrunk from coming to a final decision till ‘some more convenient season.’

In the meantime, we soon arrived at St. Heliers’ picturesque lodge in the far north, now, in these days of steam, brought within a comparatively easy distance of London, but once a good fortnight’s toil, and wild and rugged with its frowning mountains, its

boundless moors, and deep, dark, silent loch, as if civilization had never penetrated into those fastnesses—the haunts of the heath-cock and the mallard, the wary red deer and the tameless eagle. Never a merrier party met together to enjoy the best of dinners and the most undeniable of wines, after tramping and toiling the livelong day over rugged mountain and heathery corrie, than assembled nightly at St. Heliers' hospitable table. Jack Lavish of course was there, and the life and soul of our party. Major Martingale, who could shoot in a form that Norfolk itself cannot surpass, and who was ever prepared to back his own prowess with 'the grooves,' the 'smooth bore,' or 'the rod,' for any amount of wager that the incredulous might choose to hazard, was no mean auxiliary on the hill, no lifeless companion over the mahogany; and he, too, was one of the select assemblage. My kindest friend and favourite associate, the talented and romantic Hillingdon, who, with all his love for the picturesque and fondness for travel, had never been in Scotland, was expected at the end of the week; and with such companions, highland sport, highland scenery, and, above all, highland air, what more could mortal man desire? My first day's grouse-shooting, in company with our host himself, will serve as a specimen of the manner in which we passed our mornings: our evenings, alas! were devoted to excitement neither so healthy nor so harmless.



Everything St. Heliers did, whether in the way of sport or in the graver matters of life, was done in the most efficient, and, at the same time, in the most comfortable manner. He never began shooting till the 20th of August, instead of eagerly forestalling his sport on the 12th; consequently his birds were full grown and fit to kill, and his annual 'bag' better than his neighbours'. Others, who could not boast half his bodily vigour, would toil and exhaust themselves before half the day was over, and return languid and weary, leaving the best part of their ground untouched. Not so my lord; he shot, as he said, 'for pleasure,' and a pleasant sight it was to see him mounted on the cleverest of shooting-ponies, whose back he never quitted till luncheon time, knocking over his birds right and left from the saddle, with a merry smile and jovial remark, whilst ever and anon he refreshed himself from a huge wicker-covered jar of sherry-and-water, the element bearing small proportion to the wine, and carried by his 'gillie-Ganymede,' as he quaintly called a heather-legged retainer told off for this especial duty, and strictly enjoined upon no account to quit for one moment his master's side. Two couple of highbred pointers, broke to hunt together without a mistake, obeyed the signals of a wary and silent keeper, to the wave of whose arm they instantaneously dropped; two more couple, straining in the leash, held by two active 'gillies,' were ready to relieve their companions,

whilst, walking steadily in the rear, two lynx-eyed assistants were devoted solely to the duty of marking game and picking up dead birds. I walked upon St. Heliers' left, the position in which he always placed his friend, for, as he truly remarked, 'I can shoot him, but he cannot shoot me.' And in this order we marshalled our forces, to beat up the quarters of the grouse and the black cock.

Of course we could both shoot 'above a bit,' as in these days of improvement in fire-arms who cannot? and woe to the unwary bird that crossed within range of Lancaster's deadly tubes. 'Mark,' I shouted, as a brood, flushed almost at my feet, wheeled down the wind to my companion, leaving the two old birds flapping their life out on the heather in front of me. 'Bang—bang,' is the reply, and two more fall to his deadly aim, whilst the well-drilled pony stands like a form of granite, and the peer reloads with the rapidity of a Cossack. We count our spoils when luncheon-time arrives, and thirty-two brace bear witness to our success. The mountain spring sparkles like a diamond, and the pure rarefied air wafts the scent of a thousand wild flowers that peep from out the purple heather; but there are truffles lurking in the bowels of that cold grouse-pie, which exact all our attentions, and I fear the gushing spring only serves to cool an enormous measure of 'Badminton,' that grateful compound of mingled claret, sugar, and soda-water; and then comes the fragrant cigar, and,

soothed by its wreathing fumes, we gaze with half-shut eye on the glorious landscape spread out before us, a sea of mountains magnificent to contemplate. An hour's repose, and it is time again to be up and doing, but the white mist has come down upon the hill-tops, and as it drives before the rising gale, the birds become wary and difficult of approach; now must we change our tactics, and sending off a party of dogs and men to sweep the opposite hill, we station ourselves, St. Heliers still glued to the pony, in a certain rocky pass, where, as he observes, we shall have 'better fun than pheasant-shooting.' Brood after brood come skimming down before the wind, high in air above our heads, and swift as the blast that whistles round us. Brood after brood pay their tribute to our skill, for right and left, brace after brace keep tumbling headlong to the ground from their pride of place. This is indeed sport, for nothing but quickness of hand, accuracy of eye, and judgment of distance, not to be deceived by pace, can succeed in such shooting as this. The weather moderates, and as we traverse the lone moor on our homeward way, we keep picking up scattered birds and flushing undisturbed coveys, till we arrive at the Lodge, exulting in the slaughter of sixty brace of fine well-grown, dark-plumaged moor-fowl. Notwithstanding the labours of the day, these lonely wilds were disturbed by the voice of revelry far into the night,—ay, even till the small hours of the

morning, lights were sparkling, and laughter was ringing under the long, low roof of our mountain home.

Knock, knock, knock, from the impatient knuckles of Hillingdon's London valet, awoke me some few mornings after my arrival from that dreamless slumber which follows a hard day's walking and a good deal of claret. Sleepless Mæcenas! for whom the tennis-ball bounded by day, the wine-cup flowed at eventide, and the distant fountain murmured at night, that you might taste repose, and all in vain! I think that even you would have slept at St. Heliers' Lodge, could you have exchanged the toga for the plaid, the classic buskins for highland brogues, and, after a day's walking with Major Martingale on the hill, and an evening spent in pledging his lordship with bumpers of '25, have wooed Morpheus in a bed such as that I left so unwillingly, in reply to the summons of the impatient gentleman's gentleman.

'My master desired me to call you, sir,' said this exotic; 'he is nearly dressed, and there are several deer in the vicinity of the house,' he added, with a degree of imagination that did him credit, as an additional inducement to me to lose no more time. Hillingdon had arrived the previous day: we had heard of deer from a rugged highlander who had taken an especial fancy to me, and it was agreed that my friend and I should be off at daybreak, and endeavour to account, if possible, for 'the master-

hart of the herd.' Away we went accordingly, in the gloaming of early morning, Hillingdon pleased with everything, and, for *him*, quite excited. Our only guide was the 'gillie' aforesaid, and a long and weary tramp he led us, as we explored every rocky pass, and deep dark corrie, with that extreme caution so excessively provoking, but so very necessary where red deer are concerned. Strange to say, Hillingdon, who had never in his life been on 'a hill' before, was the first to perceive deer, much to the admiration of our guide; but he was gifted with extraordinary powers of sight, and had often told me, that when in the desert with the Arabs, he could distinguish objects in that deluding atmosphere more clearly than the hawk-eyed Bedouin himself. The stoical highlander was now all excitement, as, throwing a few heather blossoms into the air to discover how the wind set, he held a rapid consultation in his own mind, as to how he was to 'staaalk' them as he called it, and a grim, bloodthirsty smile illumined his countenance, as he hit upon the most likely method. And now we began a series of manoeuvres wily as those of an Indian, whilst every posture was put in practice that might dislocate the joints of the human frame. First we ran for a good half-mile stretch over the open, to secure a position to start from, before 'the deers' should move. The ground was deep, the pace terrific, and, as Hillingdon said, 'the boat-race was nothing to it;' then we walked miles

in a contrary direction, to get 'their wind,' an operation in which we had some difficulty in preserving our own; then we crept, bent to an angle of forty-five, up the bed of a mountain-stream, not yet wholly dry, which introduced us to a friendly corrie, where we could stand upright, and rest our aching loins in concealment; and lastly, we 'crawled on our bellies,' like the serpent, over an interminable space of bare stubby heather, which led to some large grey stones, and which the highlander called 'a face.' At length we reached the shelter of this favourable covering, and when we dared to look up and feast our eyes upon the wanderers we had taken so much pains to circumvent, it was indeed a sight worth all the labours of the stalk. Within a hundred yards, point blank distance, a mighty stag was feeding 'broad-side on' to us, and looking almost as large as a cow. He was apparently unconscious of the vicinity of foes or ambush, and as he unconcernedly now whisked an ear, and now moved a leg, annoyed by some troublesome fly, I had time to scan him attentively, and 'count his points.' Royal! by the shade of Scrope! twelve points, as I'm a sinner, three in a cup at the top of each horn, and the largest brow antlers I ever saw: we must have that head! I had agreed that Hillingdon was to have the first shot, and I now stole a look at him to see whether he was likely to be deadly: not he: the excitement was too much, and his flushed cheek and

flashing eye told me the wrist would waver and the finger tremble when the important moment arrived. The highlander, as usual, in his eagerness for the sport, was in too great a hurry, and he put a rifle into my companion's hand with a glance that spoke volumes.

In vain I whispered almost under my breath, 'Take lots of time, Hillingdon—no hurry.' The lock of his 'Purdy' clicked with noise enough to startle a whole forest, and the nearest hind lifted her head, and snuffed the breeze as if anticipating danger. 'The monarch of the waste' naturally enough turned half-round to ascertain what had disturbed one of the ladies of his family; and Hillingdon, afraid of losing him altogether, instantly let drive at him, when in the only position that could have made a deer at that distance a difficult shot. I had seen how it was likely to be, and had remained in readiness for a miss on the part of my friend. I calculated, and with reason, that on being disturbed, the herd would take towards the hill, and I marked a sort of pathway about one hundred and fifty yards from us, that formed the easiest access to the brow over which they would probably disappear. Sure enough they came pitching and lurching along over the very ground I had marked out for them; and apparently in no great hurry, the very last of the parcel, came the still scatheless stag. Like everything else on which bets might be laid and won, I

had sedulously practised every kind of shooting, and aimed well in front of him, with perfect confidence in my rifle, I stretched him lifeless on the heather with a bullet through his heart. Hillingdon, who had not an atom of jealousy in his composition, and to whom sport was nothing compared with scenery, was as well pleased as if he had slain a hundred stags himself; and we returned to the Lodge in all the triumph that attends the 'downfall of the deer,' when, in the lack of a regular forest, you can only get the occasional chance of a shot at this seductive quadruped.

Would that we had been satisfied with the healthy and legitimate excitement of the moor and the loch — would that the demon of play had never been allowed to enter those mountain solitudes, then would our shooting have been confined to the grouse and the red deer, and no disgraceful fracas, no blood-thirsty encounter have destroyed the harmony of our morning's pleasure and our evening's glee. However, 'there's a divinity doth shape our ends, rough-hew them how we will;' and grateful must I ever be that a meeting, which, although, as in most cases of the kind, there were faults on both sides, I greatly fear originated in my own intemperate haste, was innocent of that fatal conclusion which might have left me a corpse, or stamped me a murderer on the spot. Thus it fell out, that two friends, in the common acceptation of the term, certainly two daily


associates, were placed at ten paces distance, with levelled weapons, thirsting for each other's blood.

I had already spent three delightful weeks with St. Heliers, and, except that we played high in the evenings, and I had lost largely, had enjoyed them to the uttermost, when on coming down to breakfast one cloudy morning, equipped for fishing, and promising myself from the state of the atmosphere a capital day's sport, two letters were put into my hand, on one of which the superscription of 'Her Majesty's Service' warned me immediately to read the missive. Alas, the stern requirements of duty exacted my presence in London forthwith, and there was nothing for it but to be off on the morrow. 'Well,' thought I, 'this is a bore, but still it's a change;—and now for the other letter.' As I turned to the direction, I recognised the hand of my old friend and Colonel; and as I sauntered leisurely down to the river I perused the following epistle from Cartouch :—

'Crockford's, Sept. 12th, 18—.

'MY DEAR DIGBY,—How surprised you will be to hear that I am in London; where I had not been very long, as you may believe, before I beat up your quarters, and to my disappointment, only found your address in the Highlands instead of yourself. As you are staying with St. Heliers, an old friend of mine, I have no doubt you are in very lively society, but I must write you a stave to tell you the little

that is going on in London, and likewise—what I am sure you will be glad to learn—all about myself. To begin with the latter edifying subject, you must know that I am now a ‘gentleman at large,’ being for the third time in my military career on half-pay. I could not stand the slowness of the Canadas, nor the sort of young ones the War Office put into the 101st, so I left them to come over and have a season’s hunting in England, wherewith to recruit my war-worn frame. I came home through the States, and paid our old friend Sauley a visit. He had a trotting-match coming off, which was a real good thing, and I won an infinity of dollars from a gentleman of Alabama, who paid up like a trump. You remember Levanter, who was in the regiment. I met him likewise; he has found out a dodge at long bowls, which fixes the Yankees to a certainty, and I left him at Baltimore winning their money, chains, watches, and handkerchiefs. He told me one ‘rowdy’ literally played for his shirt, and Levanter winning it, on stripping him, they found he had only ‘a collar.’ As he had a long way to walk, they left him his boots to go home in. I understand Levanter was only there for a flying visit, as he is a regular turfite in England—but he must have made his trip pay. Sauley asked after you, whom he remembered as being ‘everlastin’ ‘cute for a young one’—a great compliment from him, and a talent which I hope you turn to good account.



'I am buying horses, and have got a few very clever ones together. You know my sort—well-bred, to carry weight. I find I am quite keen about November, and look forward to it almost as much as your friend Lord Maltby, of whom I see a great deal. I was not home in time for Goodwood, but I have a capital book on the St. Leger. I stand to win five thousand by Tipstaff, and have not a losing horse in the race.

'So much for self. Now for our friends. I hear Grandison is to leave the Guards for a regiment—you probably know all about it. This will give Tom Tuft a step. The latter worthy has been celebrating his boating victory ever since, and gave a policeman such a licking the other night, that he was within an ace of getting 'a month at the mill'—probably the only 'mill' at which our friend Tom would not find himself at home. However, the magistrate was lenient, and he got off for a fine. De Rivolte is in Russia with a French marquis, so report says, but comes back to London in November; this I do not understand, as she can have no engagement at that season. Talking of Frenchmen, Carambole is at Cowes with a yacht! He came to town the other night, and won £2000 here. I saw him coming away to start again for Cowes by an early train in the most elaborate 'get up' you ever saw, and no great coat! He is a hard fellow, and they tell me is a capital sailor, though a Frenchman, but too

reckless. Evergreen has returned from abroad, his affairs having completely come round—one of the advantages, he says, of being ruined early enough in life; but he is beginning to look old. Mrs. Mantrap lingers on in town, and I see her now constantly driving about young Lavish, Jack's brother, who was rusticated the other day at Oxford; he is not good-looking, but she says he has excellent principles. She abuses you shamefully, and I had quite a row with her the other night at the Locksleys, standing up for my old pupil. She says you are a *roué*, and a gambler, and thoroughly unprincipled, and not to be depended on in any way, and all sorts of things, which I will not repeat. I conclude she is piqued at something you have said or done. I have no more news, as London is at its emptiest. I met a very charming girl the other day at Hastings—a Miss Belmont, whose father is an old friend of mine, and who knew you. If I was young and foolish, I should be in danger, as I think I never saw a nicer girl. However, it would be useless, as she is to be married almost immediately to Sir Angelo Parsons, a man you must have met. How so slow a fellow ever could get hold of such a wife is more than I can tell. They say he is very rich, which I suppose explains it.

‘Ever, my dear Digby,

‘Yours very affectionately,

‘HENRY CARTOUC.’

To describe my feelings as I read the concluding paragraph of this letter, penned in all the cheerful unconsciousness of high spirits and kindly feelings, would be impossible. It never occurred to me to doubt the authenticity of my friend's information, and I felt stunned and stupified, as I tried to realize the loneliness, the utter misery of my position. And bitterly did I regret the selfishness which had prevented my coming to an understanding with Flora; how did I curse in my very soul the vain, unstable nature that had wavered and procrastinated till it was too late—the despicable heart that was incapable of sacrificing the most frivolous pleasure for all that it held most dear. And now she was lost to me for ever, and I was alone in the world!

Till I felt that she was gone never to return. I knew not that to me Flora was all in all. Those higher principles, the noblest privilege of man, that enable the Christian to meet with unblenching front the worst that this world can show, were to me a sealed book and a mystery, and I had nothing, nothing on earth to look to for support and encouragement. The day-dream had melted into air, the bubble had burst, and, spoiled child that I was, I felt capable of wreaking my spite upon every object, animate or inanimate, that might cross my path. I felt as if it would be a relief to battle with the very wind.

Of all sports, probably that of fishing is the one

least congenial to such a frame of mind ; nor did unsuccessful efforts and broken tackle serve to raise my spirits or improve my temper. Dismissing the venerable Triton who attended me on these excursions, I wandered listlessly along the margin of the still, calm Highland loch, and gave vent to my misery unobserved. What a contrast was all around me to the heart within. The dark massive mountains, the grey-clouded sky, the broad smooth waters, unruffled by a breath, all spoke of peace and repose ; but the angry spirit that was chafing in my breast turned loathing from the quiet of the scene. I pined for action, I longed for excitement. I strove to subdue the restless workings of the mind by laborious fatigue of the body. Faster and faster I walked—I ran—hill after hill I surmounted, and prospect after prospect I turned away from in disgust. It was dark ere I returned to the Lodge, fevered and exhausted, but bearing about with me still ‘ the worm that never dies ’—the gnawing canker of remorse that comes too late.

Why did my spirits rise higher and higher ; why was my laugh the loudest, the most frantic in its mirth, when I took my seat at St. Heliers’ luxurious board ? Why did bumper after bumper that I poured down my unslaked throat fail to bring forgetfulness, and only serve to raise my craving for excitement to a maddening pitch ? The party were jovial as usual. St. Heliers, with his dry, sarcastic

humour—Jack Lavish, with his merry, thoughtless laugh—Hillingdon's quiet smile, and Martingale's eternal Newmarket stories, were all as they had ever been; and as, in consideration of my departure on the morrow, an additional *magnum* made its appearance, they voted that I was in shamefully good spirits for one who was so soon to lose their agreeable society. But the excitement of wine alone was insufficient for my boiling blood. Our usual whist-party, although the regular stakes we played nightly would have satisfied most men, was voted 'slow,' and at my instigation, the party, who had all drunk deep, were nothing loath to substitute 'chicken-hazard' for 'four by honours and the odd trick.' The stakes were 'set,' the dice rattled, and first notes, then I.O.U.'s began to circulate freely round the table. Fortune divided her favours pretty equally among my friends, and I alone lost heavily. For this I cared little; the excitement was the thing; and like the immortal Fox, of playing memory, next to the pleasure of winning, was the pleasure of losing. At last the game began to get serious; once or twice had St. Heliers good-naturedly attempted to moderate the stakes, but in vain. Cigars and brandy and soda came in, and with these additional incentives, hundreds began to change hands rapidly—and still I lost. I could have borne to be beggared by my friend Hillingdon; to jovial Jack Lavish, or hospitable St. Heliers, I could have paid

my last farthing, unflinchingly, like a gentleman ; but at the bottom of my heart there lurked a feeling of dislike towards Major Martingale, and it was galling beyond measure to lose to him those hundreds which were now so rapidly decreasing. At length, nettled by the tone of superiority which he was fond of assuming, especially after dinner, and maddened by my continued reverses, I invariably increased my 'set' heavily as soon as I saw him prepared to 'cover it;' and at last an absurdly large sum depended upon my cast of the dice. The others paused to see the throw, and Martingale, with an insolent sneer, asked if I would like to stand another hundred. 'Two,' I exclaimed, furiously, 'and two more besides that, if you dare;' and notwithstanding St. Heliers' remonstrances, the already enormous stake was increased by that amount. I dashed the box down upon the table, and one of the wished-for numbers was triumphantly landed—the other die as it rolled over on its corner struck against my adversary's hand, and I lost! I claimed another throw with vehemence, asserted that Martingale's hand had no right to be on the table, and insinuated it was done on purpose; he retorted (not courteously); and a wrangle ensued, which was referred to the party present, who gave it against me, deciding that it was impossible such a thing could have been done intentionally, but recommending that we should draw the stakes. To this we would neither of us consent, and the affair terminated in my losing all

control of my temper, and presenting Martingale with a cheque for the money, whilst I informed him 'that I distinctly begged him to understand I considered it a robbery, but not the less welcome or the more unusual to him on that account!' A dead silence ensued after this most unjustifiable demonstration. I saw his fingers quiver, and his fist clenched for an instant, but he curbed his temper in a manner that ought to have made me thoroughly ashamed of losing mine, and lighting a candle, marched out of the room without saying another syllable.

For two long hours did poor Hillingdon sit with me endeavouring by every argument in his power to prevail upon me to apologize for this unprovoked insult. But I was too obstinate to listen either to the dictates of my own better feelings or the remonstrances of my friend. No, the excitement I longed for had come at last; in the immediate prospect of a duel, my restless spirit found a sort of false repose; and strange to say, when Hillingdon left my room with a lingering step and clouded brow, to arrange with Lavish an early meeting for the morrow, I felt more composed than at any previous part of that eventful day. I undressed, went to bed, and slept soundly for hours.

Who has not felt the instinctive oppression with which we wake to misery, that our yet half-dormant faculties are unable to realize! Who does not know the steps of gradual torture with which the

first dawn of discomfort swells to the full amount of anguish that appears too heavy to be borne! As the faint streaks of early morning found their way into my apartment, I started from that deep slumber of thorough exhaustion, and woke to the realities of my position. Oh, the agony of that hour! ruin and misery stared me in the face—perhaps immediate death; I almost felt as if I could welcome its stroke, and forget all in the grave; but as I dressed, the mental strength which in most men rises with the requirements of the moment, enabled me to look upon my past conduct and present situation with a clearness and fortitude of which the day before I had felt incapable. I knew myself in the wrong as far as Martingale was concerned, and although too proud to confess it, I determined that nothing should induce me to lift my hand against him. I made up my mind to receive his fire, and discharge my own pistol in the air. I felt more comfortable after this resolution, and walked with Hillingdon to the destined scene of combat with a *sang-froid* and carelessness that surprised even myself.

It was strange that, knowing as I did my antagonist to be an unerring shot, I could not realize the danger of my position. I tried to fancy I was on the brink of another world; I tried to think of the future, but in vain; the most trifling objects arrested my attention, and my mind kept wandering through all the levities and frivolities to which I was accustomed.

Is this one of the weaknesses incidental to humanity? Can this powerlessness of mental concentration be the cause of that supreme indifference which we hear of even in criminals on the scaffold?

The mist was curling down the mountain tops as our seconds 'put us up' at the longest ten paces ever measured by mortal stride, but which we owed to the generous length of Jack Lavish's legs. Hillingdon's lip quivered as he put my weapon in my hand. What hours seemed to elapse ere the signal was given. A sharp whiz, and quick, suppressed report found me still unhurt, and lifting the muzzle of my weapon, I discharged it high in air. We shook hands, and walked back to breakfast. *Sic transit, &c.*; but as we neared the house, Hillingdon whispered to me, 'Touch and go, Digby—he put 'one' in your sleeve;' and sure enough the coat and under garment were perforated by the mischief-meaning messenger. 'Good heavens!' said St. Heliers, as he delightedly welcomed us to breakfast, 'when I asked you fellows to shoot, I had no idea you meant to vary your sports by such a performance as this.'

As I steamed southward towards the Scottish border, I could hardly fancy that the events of the last twenty-four hours were aught but a dream. Alas! I had Cartouch's letter to convince me of their reality; and as again and again I scanned the bitter paragraph that told of Flora's destiny, deeper and deeper 'the iron entered into my soul.'

CHAPTER X.

THE OLD HOUSE AT HOME.

THERE be bright faces in the busy hall ;
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall.

At least we have the authority of Byron for supposing that such was the reception of the Polish chieftain in his ancestral home ; and such was, indeed, the 'order of the day' at old Haverley, on the auspicious occasion of the heir's completing his twenty-first year.

The serfs were glad in Lara's wide domain,
And slavery half forgot her feudal chain ;

in which respect those semi-barbarians of the north seem to have conducted themselves much in the same manner as their more civilized fellows of the Anglo-Saxon race. The gentlemen 'in powder and plush,' who still swarmed at Haverley, giving vent to their rejoicings by an enormous consumption of provender and wassail at the shortest possible intervals ; whilst 'so numerous ! so flourishing ! and so influential a tenantry !' as the farmers holding land under Sir Peregrine were invariably denominated in

all after-dinner speeches, forgot hard times, hazy weather, and indifferent crops, whilst they poured bumper after bumper down those insatiable and vigorous throats, which still shouted good wishes, health, and future prosperity, to the 'young 'squire.' All was hilarity, hospitality, and merry-making. A stranger would have supposed that he saw in that dignified landlord, those hearty retainers, and that princely old hall, the very type of English prosperity and comfort. Alas! alas! the gilding was but upon the surface; the house of Grand was rotten at the core. Look down, Sir Hugo le Grand! fifth baron of the name,—look down from the dingy canvass, in the background of which a furious battle is raging, much out of drawing, whereat, trusting in the cumbersome defence of your mail and plate, you are carelessly turning your chivalrous back,—look down, and look your last upon a scene of rejoicing that shall never again take place in your old halls. Could you have foreseen the termination of your line, the fate of your posterity, on that triumphant day when, as veracious chroniclers assert, you broke a lance in knightly courtesy with 'the Montmorency,' high constable of France, and kings and emperors, peers and paladins, looked on and signed approval of the 'gentle and loving passage of arms,' you would have wished to exchange the Spanish coat of proof for a silken jerkin; you would have prayed that the constable's honoured weapon, driven home by the arm

of that practised warrior, might splinter in your heart. But in the meantime riot and revelry must go on under your very nose; and often are you pointed out and much is your representation criticised, for you are the great card of our family, and Sir Peregrine is never tired of talking about 'the famous Sir Hugo—one of my ancestors, sir, a man who knew his position, and an ornament to the house of Grand.'

It was my one-and-twentieth birth-day, my 'coming of age,' and I had the evening before arrived from London to assist at the rejoicings which heralded this important period. The duel in the Highlands, a nine-days'-wonder, was forgotten by all but Sir Peregrine, who rather liked it, and was much fonder of dwelling upon the particulars, and discussing 'that affair of honour, sir, in which my boy was concerned as a principal,' than was agreeable to 'my boy' himself, who, having behaved badly, had the grace to be ashamed of it. Rapidly as I had journeyed to town from the scene of action, rumour, with her thousand tongues, had preceded me, and had furnished as many versions of the 'rencontre.' Mrs. Man-trap actually made advances towards a reconciliation, I am convinced in the hope that I might give her the earliest and fullest account of the whole business; but miserable as I was about Flora, hampered for money, and disgusted with myself, I studiously avoided the society of that gossiping enchan-

tress. Cartouch was not in town when I arrived,—I could hear nothing of the Belmonts,—Sir Angelo Parsons I myself saw coming out of ‘Storr and Mortimer’s,’ a convincing proof that *he*, at any rate, was going to be married; and thoroughly sick at heart, I was glad when a summons arrived from Sir Peregrine to recall me to Haverley, as the most important item in all his arrangements for festivity.

It was late in the autumn, but a few of those fine days of which summer had hardly given us our share, seemed to linger yet; and as I drove across the park, a glorious sunset was bathing in its golden light the fine old trees, still unconscious of the axe. How well I knew each nook and corner of the domain. The very deer seemed like old familiar friends, and every turn of the avenue appeared to greet me with a silent welcome. Here I had shot my first partridge; there I had jumped my pony over the sunk fence, to the admiration of an Etonian schoolfellow. Yonder, where the corner of the lake gleamed through the low wood, I had landed my first pike; and in those smooth, peaceful waters, Flint, the keeper, had taught me to dive, float, and swim. The next turn opens a view of the house, and stately, in truth, looks the massive grey old hall, of that particular order of architecture which, for want of professional knowledge, I am fain to call the ‘composite irregular,’ inasmuch as it had been built in the four-

teenth century, added to in the sixteenth, much damaged during the civil wars, and very inefficiently repaired at the Restoration, partially burnt down in the reign of Queen Anne, and reconstructed upon an enormous scale by the spirited proprietor, who however did not live to complete his intentions: since then, rooms had been added and offices built as suited the exigencies of the moment or the taste of 'the Grands;' and now the very irregularity of the mass gave to the old place a picturesque, even a romantic appearance, at least to my eyes, which I have looked for in vain elsewhere.

As I drove up to the house, my better nature, influenced as usual by the accidental force of circumstances, was in the ascendant, and I felt that I could indeed love my home, that I was capable of any sacrifice for such a place; and how readily at that moment would I have exchanged the false glare and heartless frivolity of 'the world' for a peaceful country life in these long-loved haunts, with farming, field-sports, and rural duties to occupy my mornings, and Flora's thrilling smile to welcome my return. But that might never be now, and as I felt in my own heart I was forced back upon a career that in these more rational moments I loathed, I laid the blame upon my destiny, that convenient scapegoat on which a weak spirit places all the misfortunes and miseries brought about by its own incapacity or misconduct. Destiny, indeed! as though Providence had not ar-

ranged that every man should be the framer of his own destiny, and that the strong, firm mind, the unblenching fearless heart should shape its course steady and persevering to the end, though exposed to the storms of obloquy and buffeted by the waves of misfortune.

‘Welcome home, Master Digby,’ said old Soames, chief butler ever since I could remember, and on whom the course of time seemed powerless to imprint marks of decay. His hair had been white and his face red when I used to run up and down stairs after him in a frock and bare legs, holding on by those broad coat-tails, or petitioning for a ride on that sturdy shoulder; and now, though the countenance had deepened in hue, and the waistcoat increased if possible in volume, he was the same Soames still. ‘Welcome home, indeed, sir. This way, if you please, Master Digby. Sir Peregrine have been expecting you since three o’clock.’ And he ushered me down the well-known passage leading to my father’s snugger, adding, with paternal affection, enhanced by an early dinner, ‘How you have growed, Master Digby,—quite a fine gentleman, and it seems but the other day as I made the bishop for your christening,’ alluding to the exhilarating compound dignified by that ecclesiastical title. Ere Soames had concluded his reminiscences and reflections, I was face to face with my father, and my heart smote me to think of my unfilial behaviour and systematic neg-

lect of him, when I saw so visible an alteration in the form and features of the old man. He was much bent and wasted in figure, whilst a drawn look about the eyes, and sharpened expression of the whole countenance, betokened increasing feebleness and decay. Still there was the same proud bearing, the same courtly gestures, above all, the same concise, forcible, and rather satirical manner, which marks the former associates of 'the Prince Regent,' and which is fast dying out with the remains of the 'Carlton House school.' Sir Peregrine was kindness itself, but his affectionate demonstrations were tempered with a degree of reserve and self-respect inseparable from one who was ever conscious of 'his position,' and our greeting was something between that of father and son, monarch and heir-presumptive. Once, and once only, nature asserted her dominion over the parent, and it was with faltering voice and moistened eye that my father expressed his desire to make some arrangement which, now that I had come of age, should render me to a certain extent independent, 'and which,' he added, with a momentary pang of self-reproach, 'I fear I have too long neglected. But we will *see about it*. We must have Mortmain down, my dear Digby, and it is indeed strange,' he continued, relapsing insensibly into the old vice-regal manner, 'if, with our influence and in 'our position,' we cannot place everything on a footing which shall be satisfactory to the future representative of the family.'

Such were the generalities in which my poor father was wont to indulge, and thus would he delude himself into a vague idea of prosperity which had vanished, and power which had never existed. As to Sir Peregrine's influence, it was completely swamped, in a political point of view, by a neighbouring earl, whose grandfather, an enterprising manufacturer, had bequeathed to his descendant, besides that knowledge (of business) which is better than 'houses and lands,' a very large proportion of the latter inferior articles, and capital enough to buy every free and independent voter in the county nine times over; and as regarded that position of which from childhood I had heard so much, what was it but a large ill-regulated establishment, a discontented tenantry, and a property mortgaged to its full value? But this was no time to dwell upon such unimportant matters. A large party, including the aforesaid earl, were staying in the house, and a host of neighbours invited to dinner. The following morning, my birth-day, was to witness merry-making and rejoicings for every class of the community within miles of Haverley. An ox was to be roasted whole for the poor, who prefer their meat under-done, and digestion to be promoted by sack-racing, pole-climbing, beer-drinking, and other rustic sports. There was to be a grand dinner to the tenantry, and a ball for their wives and daughters in the evening; whilst the remainder of the week was to be devoted to those guests of higher rank who were staying with

us to shoot our pheasants, ride our horses, drink our champagne, and, in all probability, repay our hospitality by voting the son a puppy and the father a bore!

The morning came, and bright and beautiful 'the glorious sun uprist,' promising us one more fine day in October. Breakfast was hardly concluded, and I was struggling to obtain sufficient sustenance for the fatigues of the future, between the ceaseless chatter of Mrs. Ramrod (who, in consideration of having known me as a boy, had taken possession of me, body and soul), and the long sunny ringlets of Miss Batt, who was obliged to sit so near me that they were continually interfering with my egg and drooping into my plate—an arrangement I should have less disliked had the keen country air not made me so voracious. Well, breakfast was coming to an end, and I was striking up a great friendship with the damsel of the long locks, when a powerful band, much out of tune, and performing an air commonly known in agricultural districts as that which destroyed one of 'the milky mothers of the herd,' marshalled down the avenue a sturdy throng of ruddy faces and stalwart forms, known as the Odd Fellows' Friendly Society, who with military precision formed a circle in front of the house, while the oldest and oddest fellow of the lot, whom I recognised as the clerk of an adjoining parish, read from a much-bethumbed paper a congratulatory address in verse,


vigorous in conception, and somewhat startling in rhyme, as the concluding stanza sufficiently exemplifies :—

Then, Captain Grand, accept our heartiest wishes,
 And do not deem your humble friends officious.
 Health, length of days, a fair and blooming bride,
 And blessed with babes and sucklings too beside.
 Such is our prayers ; before we do adjourn,
 Accept our welcome, as we hope for yours !

How could humble prose, even the prose of a Demosthenes or a Cicero, reply to such 'winged words' as these? Nevertheless I stood under the old portico, and with bared head and respectful gestures, thanked my well-wishers for their courtesy, preserving a gravity for which I have ever since enjoyed the reward of an approving conscience. The Odd Fellows cheered my speech heartily, for which, as a very young orator, I was much obliged to them, since it requires a long apprenticeship indeed among the practical and experienced ranks of our senate to bear unabashed the chilling silence, or worse still, the sarcastic applause, with which a brilliant and long-studied peroration is so often received in that assemblage.

This ceremony well over, the slaughtered ox was borne in procession, the aforesaid band performing in divers keys the air of 'Oh, the roast beef of Old England!' and having been about as much roasted as the woodcock which is allowed to see the fire ere introduced to a thorough epicure, was cut up and

distributed in no very appetizing-looking morsels to the poor of the parish, whilst stentorian voices pledged health and prosperity to the young 'squire in floods of good strong Haverley ale. After which the shouters recreated themselves with wheel-barrow races, the charioteers being blindfolded, and creating no small confusion from their furious driving; then they climbed a pole, which emblem of ambition was well greased within a few feet of the top, and he who had struggled manfully to within an arm's-length of his aim, found that when almost within his grasp he was doomed to be disappointed, and to go down, as is usual in real life, a good deal faster than he came up. The prize surmounting this perpendicular difficulty was at length wrested by a cunning chimney-sweep, who, taking a pocketful of soot up with him, and refreshing his palms therewith at intervals, got them so completely grimed at last as to render any amount of soap of no effect, and thus succeeded in carrying off the huge leg of mutton that had tempted him so long. Nor were the fair damsels of the district excluded from their share in these rural sports, an under-garment of snowy texture being provided for her whose dainty feet could brush the dew quickest from the lawn. This race, to use a turf expression, brought together a capital entry; and after a severe struggle, and the production of many diverse-coloured garters, a nimble dairy-maid bore off the prize.



As the afternoon waned, and the hearty farmers began to feel that their usual dinner-hour was long since gone by, many an eye was wistfully directed towards the tent prepared for our great repast, and many a vigorous appetite voted four o'clock the best part of the day, as they seated themselves at the three lengthy tables, of which a cross one at the top, raised upon a sort of dais, formed a nucleus for the great guns of the party, the rector of the parish, the member for the county, the neighbouring earl, two or three adjoining 'squires, Sir Peregrine and myself.

Beef and venison were rapidly consumed, and strong port and sherry, varied by deep draughts of John Barleycorn, as rapidly disappeared; faces waxed red and apoplectic, and tongues, now loosened from the bands of shyness and reserve, chattered in deafening confusion. Toasts of loyalty and patriotism serve to bring in the chief event of the evening, and the steward of the estate rapping loudly on the table, obtains a dead silence, truly appalling to old farmer Scales, who, in right of seniority, has taken upon himself the office of proposing the young 'squire's health. The sturdy yeoman has not, as he honestly confesses, 'the gift of the gab,' but when he wants a word he waits for it with a patience and determination that would drive a nervous man frantic. The pauses become longer and longer as the orator gets deeper into his subject, till an extremely abrupt conclusion and an ambiguous compliment, referring to the fatted calf

being slain on my return, empties every bumper of 'black strap,' like a shot, and vociferous cheering proves that farmer Scales has completely expressed the feelings of his audience.

Now for the reply. 'Honour'—much flattered—early boyhood—familiar faces—agricultural prosperity—yeomanry of old England—no place like home—kind father (cheers)—indulgent landlord (more cheers)—hope often to be thus surrounded—allusion to the old roof-tree, and a Greek quotation taken at random from Thucydides, (the latter as being perfectly unintelligible is received with uproarious applause,) serve to express the heartfelt sentiments of gratitude with which I beg to drink all their good healths; and down I sit, having 'done it' to a turn. The mirth gets fast and furious, the county member sings a capital song; Sir Peregrine executes an oration, such as might have been made by Leonidas to his doomed band, so pompous, so imposing, so almost funereal is it in its grandeur. We drink the earl's health; we drink the member's health; we drink Dr. Driveller's, who weeps tears of port in his reply; we drink the fox-hounds, and the welkin rings with every cheer and holloa known to the votaries of Diana; we drink the 'Merry Harriers,' and Mr. Mottles, the sporting manager of that rather 'scratch' establishment, is so overpowered by his feelings as to be obliged to be taken away senseless, a broad hint, which suggests to us the propriety of breaking up the present sitting,

and adjourning to the ball-room, where we are followed by all but a few steady old sexagenarians, whose clay, probably in consideration of there being no time to be lost, requires a deal of moistening ere it returns to its parent soil.

There is much beauty amongst the farmers' wives and daughters, and I may fairly hope that my powers of endurance and activity on that laborious evening won me golden opinions from them all. Country dances without end, waltzes, galops, polkas innumerable, a cotilion with pretty Miss Batt as a great treat, and a cigar to wind up the night at six in the morning with the Marquis de Carambole, a good-humoured Frenchman, who had come all the way from London to 'assist at our festivities,' concluded for me the hardest twenty-four hours I can recollect to have ever experienced.

The sun was rising ere I sought my pillow, and, looking out over the expanse of hill and dale, wood and water, growing into life under his beams, I turned away with a sickening feeling at my heart as I thought, 'Flora, Flora, what is all this, when thou art lost to me for ever? What are wealth, magnificence, and merry-making without thee? What care I for the old hall, the rich and lovely domain? There is no beauty where thou art not!'

Mournful thoughts for twenty-one! Happy is he who hath not out-lived his boyhood, till ripened Prime brings with it the conviction that all is vanity;

the experience that teaches us to expect no resting-place here below, to look steadfastly forward to the future—not the immediate future of our short span of existence, but the real future of eternity. Some men are boys all their lives, and as such are envied and enviable for the lightness of their spirits, their keen enjoyment of life. But these can never know the stern, severe training that leads direct to Truth. Perhaps for them such ordeal may not be necessary, and is mercifully dispensed with. For beneficial as may be the ultimate effects of disappointment and unhappiness, it cannot but seem hard that the unfurrowed brow should ache with thought, the beardless cheek waste and pale with care. Nor can we expect the youth, however fast he may have spent his boyhood, however dearly he may have purchased his knowledge, to arrive at once at that resigned and happy period, when man is enabled to say, in heartfelt thankfulness and humble confidence, 'It is good for me that I have been in trouble.'

Who is there that delights in the deadly tubes, levelled with accuracy and quickness against the flying covey or the dodging coney? Who is there that loves to range the rich stubbles and the russet coppice, to start the frightened hare from her form, or flush the gaudy pheasant from his covert, and doth not welcome with all his heart the keen, pure air of a bracing morning in October? when the outlying spinnies are to be beat, and the scattered par-

tridges, wild, wary, and quick upon the wing, will prove no unworthy triumph. Haverley was the place of all others for a varied and enjoyable day's shooting. Without the masses of game which swarm like locusts upon a Norfolk manor—without 'bouquets' of pheasants, radiating in all directions from what is appropriately termed a 'hot corner,'—there was a fair sprinkling of both winged and ground game, that might satisfy the keenest sportsman as to the sufficient number of objects whereon to exercise his prowess; whilst the large enclosures, double hedge-rows, and undulating surface of the land, imposed upon him that bodily exercise which so much enhances the pleasure of all field sports. Nor was the party marshalled in deadly array upon the steps of the old Hall, the second morning after the coming-of-age day, loath to enjoy to the utmost all the amusement our coverts could afford. A motley crew we were, lounging about under the portico or on the lawn, in every variety of costume yet invented for the slaughter of the beasts of the field, from old Ramrod's antediluvian velveteen jacket, with skirts to his heels, and pockets in whose yawning caverns you might almost stow away a red-deer, to Carambole's smart and fanciful tunic, picturesque as that of a Robin Hood, with its braid and facings, and harmonizing well with the 'Marquis's' carefully trimmed beard, curling moustache, and redundancy of jewellery—not to mention his white kid gloves,

and the enormous cigar which, ever glowing between his lips, seemed like a Phoenix to spring from the ashes of its predecessor. Nor was the Church unrepresented in our sporting assemblage. The Reverend Amos Batt, the shortest-sighted man that ever squinted over a gun-barrel, the most dangerous neighbour that ever lined 'a ride,' was as usual the keenest to begin, in his excessive fondness for that amusement to which of all others he was least adapted by nature, and fidgetted about in his dark clerical shooting-dress in a manner that called down the contemptuous reproof of Mr. Flint, the keeper, who, grouped with his myrmidons and half-a-dozen spaniels, stood within ear-shot of the Hall door.

'Never do to begin without Mr. Spencer,' said Flint, probably in consideration of many a golden benefit received and expected,—'and here he comes,' as my old schoolfellow, Tom Spencer, a first-rate shot, and the pleasantest undergraduate Oxford could boast, cantered up to our party, and apologizing for the delay, more especially to Mr. Batt—on whose daughter, the damsel of the long locks, I soon found out my old chum was sweet—announced his readiness to commence.

Guns were shouldered, dogs strained in their couples, the 'Marquis' began to sing, and we were soon in the thick of it.

'*L'affaire commence,*' said Carambole, as we heard a shot upon our right, probably from the unerring

weapon of Tom Spencer, who was always placed where the shooting was most difficult, and had now been detached by Flint on 'particular service,' to stop any wandering pheasants that might take a fancy to a prolonged flight into a neighbouring manor.

'*Voyons,*' added the Frenchman, as an over-anxious hare cantered leisurely across the ride, and he tumbled her heels over head into the opposite brushwood.

'Mark!' sung out Ramrod, and a magnificent cock-pheasant came sailing down the wind on his broad pinions, right above our heads, and 'rocketeer' as he was, I brought him to the ground.

'*Tenez, ce n'est pas mal,*' said my talkative companion; and his observation lost him a double shot at a couple of rabbits that were stealing warily on towards us.

And now the constant rustle among the dried leaves, and occasional snap of a rotten twig in the cover, show us that the beaters are approaching, and the pheasants, unwilling to rise, are hurrying to and fro in an unenviable state of uncertainty. Carambole and I get outside the fence, and standing well away from the plantation, prepare for action.

They must leave home at last, for the beaters are drawing near, and the hedge prevents their running any further. Up they get, by twos and threes, amongst cries of 'mark!' 'hen!' 'rabbit to the right!' 'hare back!' and down they come, before

the Marquis and myself—the former, I must confess, shooting like a trump, and smoking away the whole time like a steam-engine. Presently Flint appears through the thickest part of the hedge, and with strict injunctions to a ragged little urchin, holding on by a stick as long as himself, to ‘beat it out,’ touches his hat, and inquires into the amount of slaughter. Of course a good many pheasants ‘went back,’ that mysterious bourne from which no game ever returns; and of course we ought to have had an additional man somewhere else, ‘to stop’—for who ever yet knew a keeper satisfied with the list of killed? But our party were flushed with success, and, walking in a line over a few intervening fields to the next covert, we picked up a stray hare, and two or three brace of wild partridges that did credit to our aim, ere we again entered upon the woodland chase.

A fabulous report of a woodcock, supposed to have been seen by Mr. Batt! created much excitement in this locality, not diminished by my ‘viewing away’ a magnificent old fox, which I had great difficulty in preventing Carambole from shooting. It did me good to see the gallant animal gliding easily along over the ridge and furrow of the adjoining field, his bright rich coat glistening in the sun, and his stealthy form the very impersonation of speed and symmetry. Ere I could give him a second ‘view-halloa’ he had disappeared, and I felt half ashamed of my

enthusiasm when I saw 'the Marquis's' look of astonishment at an excitement he could not the least comprehend.

The love of fox-hunting is indeed an inexplicable passion; the man who has once really felt it never forgets his attachment to the cause. Let him leave off his favourite pursuit for years, put him to any other sport, business, or excitement you will; place him in any position, or under any circumstances which render it impossible for him to gratify his prevailing taste—but only mention the word fox-hunting, only lead to some subject connected with that fascinating sport, and you will bring the colour to his cheek and the light to his eye, though age may have dimmed the one and sorrow furrowed the other. But in the meantime, walking knee-deep in stubble, and straggling waist-deep through tangled brier and impervious covert, had made us all excessively hungry. Nor were we sorry to behold, on the lee-side of Upper Long-wood, a gipsy fire cheerfully burning, a pot of comforting soup hanging gracefully thereon; a screen cleverly constructed to keep off the wind, and a table laid out with sundry good things for the refreshment of the inward man; whilst Soames, who piqued himself much on these impromptu out-door arrangements, trotted about, greatly to his own satisfaction, with a jorum of a curiously compounded 'mull,' grateful beyond measure in the raw air of an October afternoon.

What a merry party we were. Our sport had been excellent. Ramrod, a regular old poacher, who always asked to take away what he killed, had amassed a capital bag, by dint of shooting hares sitting, taking unwary rabbits by surprise, and poking most perseveringly at game upon the wing. The rest of the party had been equally successful in a more legitimate manner. Even Mr. Batt, after the expenditure of a vast deal of powder and shot, had succeeded in bagging a hen-pheasant and a wood-pigeon. Carambole had hardly missed a shot. I should be afraid to say how many cigars he had smoked, and his mercurial spirits were now at their highest—he *would* drink ‘*encore un coup of ze moll,*’ as he called Soames’s fragrant mixture; he *would* sing French bacchanalian songs, in a rich and mellow voice, which delighted even the austere Flint, who allowed us more time than usual for our repast; and, in short, nothing could have gone off better than the whole thing, had it not been for an untoward accident, perhaps partly to be attributed to the jollity of our luncheon, which damped our afternoon’s amusement, and which might have had a very serious termination.

We were shooting the last covert, and twilight was rapidly approaching, when the Reverend Amos Batt, whom I had placed next to myself, in order, if possible, to moderate his keenness, which always increased as the day drew towards its close, was suddenly seized

with a strong inclination for ground game, having discovered that he was most successful in that style of gunning. As long as he was close to me I prevented his shooting back amongst the beaters, loading one barrel with the other at full-cock, and a few like eccentricities in which it was his habit to indulge; but on my leaving him to take up a position a few yards further down the ride, what was my horror to behold him deliberately level and fire both barrels in the direction where I knew Flint must have placed a gentleman, or, as he called it, 'a gun.'

A simultaneous roar of agony from old Ramrod, and exclamation of satisfaction from Mr. Batt, 'poor thing, I thought it best to put it out of its pain!' convinced me that the Major's York-tan gaiters must have received a charge of No. 6 from the short-sighted divine; and on rushing up to the sufferer, who fortunately, from the distance at which he 'stood fire,' though much stung at the moment was not seriously injured, a general explanation took place, from which it appeared that the yellow-gaiters, peeping through a hole in the lower part of the hedge, presented to the clergyman's imperfect vision the image of a fine old hare sitting! This was an opportunity not to be lost, and taking a deliberate, point-blank, aim, the eager sportsman pulled. The writhing of the object attested the accuracy of his eye, and in his merciful intention of putting the animal out of its pain, and anxiety not to lose this

addition to his 'bag,' he unhesitatingly gave the sufferer the contents of his other barrel.

No wonder the Major halloed; and when he found that the accident had taken place, as he called it, 'on purpose,' his wrath was not to be appeased. We sent him home in the game-cart, swearing horribly; and as it was by this time quite dark, we here terminated our unlucky day's shooting.

I fear the old warrior's ire would not have been mollified could he have heard Tom Spencer and myself laughing over the catastrophe, as smoking our cigars we walked home together behind the rest of our companions. There is nothing like 'a weed' in the dark to draw on confidential communication between two long-parted friends, and, ere the lights of the Hall twinkled on us through the shades of night, we had touched upon one subject after another, made reciprocal disclosures in the strictest confidence, as to our respective studs, and interchanged an abbreviated history of our first loves, till Tom at last entrusted me, in the openness of his heart, with the important secret that he was over head and ears in love with the fair Julia Batt; that he was resolved to marry her as soon as he had taken orders and got 'a living,'—two events that young men, till undeceived by experience, are apt to consider synonymous—but that he had not yet declared his attachment to his lady-love; and he had a shrewd suspicion that, however agreeable they might be to the daughter, the reverend

Amos, in his paternal care, highly disapproved of my friend's attentions.

'If I can assist you in any way, my dear Tom, command me,' said I, as we entered the house, and stumped off to our respective dressing-rooms. 'Tomorrow is our county ball, as you know, and you will have every opportunity of making play with the damsel, as I can undertake to keep papa in conversation, as to the respective merits of heavy and light guns, self-primers, revolvers, and other deadly weapons, long enough to enable you to propose, be accepted, ay, and carry her off in a post-chaise and four to boot.'

So saying, I opened the door of my comfortable snugger, where hot water, dry things, and a blazing fire, presented all the materials for restoring the outward man to a state of gentlemanlike sleekness and order.

But, alas! the post—that remorseless emblem of Fate—had arrived during my absence; and with a blush of shame and remorse, with a vague feeling of unaccountable apprehension that made my heart beat, and my breath come quick, I recognised, in a foreign letter that lay upon my toilet-table, the well-known handwriting of Zoë de Grand-Martigny.

When Soames knocked at my door an hour afterwards to say dinner was on the table, I was still sitting in my arm-chair, with that open letter in my hand. Thoughts, thoughts—those mysterious work-

ings of the soul, which form alternately our blessing and our curse, were inundating my brain in countless succession, like the waves of the sea. In that hour I lived over many a long and happy day of the irrevocable past. Again I saw that glorious girl, in all the pride of her beauty, as I beheld her for the first time. Again I walked with her in the magnificent scenery of Niagara, and heard her gentle voice, thrilling to my very soul, despite the roar of the cataract. Again I gazed upon her graceful form, and long black tresses, drooping over the still, deep waves of the St. Lawrence, as many a time and oft I had seen her, and sat with her by the margin of that mighty river, in the golden summer evenings of the West. Again I saw the glittering jet bracelet, unclasped from that snowy arm; and once more was her gentle sorrowing face turned upon mine, in mute, appealing agony, as she bid me a long and last farewell. And then how maddening to think that I had seen her once since, in the pompous revelry, the noisy frivolity of a London ball; and that my cursed fate had prevented me from so much as exchanging a syllable with one erst so fondly loved.

But the letter, gentle, feminine, high-principled as herself, explained all this; and as I sat out the tedious, formal dinner, and strove to sustain my part in the forced gaiety, the vain nonsense that wore through a weary evening, I felt indeed unworthy of that generous missive which reposed upon my heart.

Not a word of reproach, not a word of repining did it contain; far above such feelings, far above the weaknesses of her sex, was the pure, high-minded writer. Simply and kindly, with no soreness of injured pride, with no affectation of indifference, did she point out to me the instability of my character, the heartlessness of my conduct. She had long discovered—so she went on to say—she had long discovered by my letters that such a weak and wavering affection as mine was no equivalent for the loving heart which she surrendered so wholly and entirely; but while no other shared my love, insufficient as it was, she was content. When, however, my letters got fewer and cooler, when she heard not only of follies and vices in my London career, but likewise found my name coupled with those of Sirens celebrated for the destruction to which they lured their votaries, she resolved, with a firmness and determination that marked her character, and made her the resolute though feminine being that she was, to judge for herself. An opportunity offered for her to come to England, and of that she took advantage. She was in London for more than a fortnight, without informing me of her whereabouts; and ‘judge, Captain Grand,’ she wrote, ‘whether that was not a struggle. At last came the night of the Apsley-house Ball. I need not repeat what I saw and heard there, nor how evident it was to me that the absent Zoë was at length completely forgotten. I left the

ball, and in a week was crossing the Atlantic on my homeward voyage. I had satisfied myself of the reality of my worst fears, and it was evident to me that a continuance of our engagement would be to you a source of restraint and annoyance, as of utter misery to myself. It is better for us both that we should part, and much as it has cost me, long as I have pondered, ere I could make my mind up to write this letter, I feel less unhappy now that it is accomplished. Perhaps it would have been better had we never met, but it is useless to look back into the past, or to speculate upon what might or might not have been. You have my best wishes, my heartfelt prayers for your future welfare and success. It will be better that you should not answer this letter; and as this is the last time that I shall ever write to you, forgive me if I venture to offer a few words of humble advice to one in whom I shall always feel deeply interested. The fault of your character is want of purpose. Do not mistake the impulse of the moment for the true feelings of your heart, and do not throw aside every pursuit as soon as success dawns upon your efforts. Bend those talents which I know you to possess to some definite object, and hesitate no longer to embark on some worthy career. Had I been a man, I should have been ambitious. Forgive me, my dear Digby, (for the last time I call you so,) forgive me for thus presuming to dictate to

one whom I so kindly regard, and believe me ever
your true well-wisher,

‘ZOE DE GRAND-MARTIGNY.’

And this was the woman I had thrown over for a Mrs. Man-trap: this was the true and noble heart I had disregarded and forgotten. And now, forsooth, I had my reward. I should never see her more. I had lost her love, and was unworthy of her friendship. Ah, Zoë! it would indeed have been better had we never met. I was not worthy of you, even in my thoughtless and unpolluted boyhood; and now, alas! how can I dare to think of purity such as yours! My weak and vacillating character, ever acted upon by the influence of the moment, could never have mated with your high resolve, your noble and unselfish spirit. I am, in truth, a being of an inferior order. Ay, even now, when I am fresh from the perusal of your generous and forgiving letter—when my heart is sore with the thought of your utter sacrifice of all your hopes—a sacrifice which I am incapable of making, but which I can still appreciate—the image of Flora Belmont rises amidst the wreck of your happiness, and outshines in its fresh beauty my earlier idol. Even now, unmanly, ungrateful, heartless as it may appear, despite of pity, despite of shame and remorse, something in my inmost soul whispers triumphantly—I am free! I am free!

Some people are determined believers in the truth

of 'presentiments,' others assert that all such fancied foreshadowings of the future are but the nonsensical effect of weak nerves acted upon by an excited brain. Be this how it may, I can only account for my buoyancy of spirits during the day following the receipt of Zoë's letter—a communication which ought to have made me thoroughly unhappy, which did fill me with bitter regrets and burning self-reproach—by some vague prophetic sense of what was awaiting me at one of those solemn performances yclept a county ball, immediately about to take place. This ball, be it understood, was a yearly penance, undergone by the nobility, gentry, and squirearchy of ——shire with a fortitude and resignation worthy of a better cause. That their presence in the county assembly rooms—a spacious structure, erected over the gaol, where the votaries of Terpsichore disturbed with their revels the gloomy malefactor in his cell—was a voluntary discipline of the severest order, I gather from the fact that, excepting some of the youngest of the very young ladies, I never heard any one put in a good word for the unfortunate ball. 'It was a bore—it was a nuisance—the rooms were always hot, and the weather always cold—the passages were ill-lighted, and the moon sure to be off duty—all the roads in the vicinity were bad, and as for the music—don't talk of the music!' But notwithstanding all these drawbacks, long consultations as to the propriety of attending were invariably wound up with

the annual 'however, I suppose we *must* go;' and this ideal obligation served to bring a very considerable number of white satin shoes and snowy neckcloths to assist at the festival. We had, of course, talked it well over at Haverley; with the exception of Carambole, who thought it *charmante*, we had severally and collectively expressed our decided intentions of not going. Nevertheless, post-horses were ordered as on all previous occasions, every vehicle and carriage-horse in the stable was put in requisition, and half-past nine p.m. saw the whole party, all but Sir Peregrine, whose infirmities would have made it imprudent to venture, cloaking and flirting in the hall previous to a dark drive of ten or eleven miles. Julia Batt looked excessively pretty. I thought her eyes were all the brighter for an anticipated waltz with Tom Spencer; and I could take my oath, by the care with which that worthy was pinning a camelia in his button-hole, that the long-haired damsel had the same morning purloined it from the conservatory. I think I earned her eternal gratitude; I know Tom Spencer told me I was 'a brick' when I arranged that they should go together in the chariot, with only sleepy Mrs. Ramrod as a chaperon. Her injured lord, with Carambole and another dancing man, trusted themselves to my guidance in the phaeton. I believe that had old Ramrod known the off-horse was a four-year old, then in harness for the second time, he would have preferred walking; however,

where 'ignorance is bliss,' people are easily satisfied, and we rattled over the ill-paved streets of the county-town, and up to the crowded door, from whence strains of ceaseless music were issuing, in perfect safety, having done the distance handsomely in seven minutes under the hour.

Why is it incumbent on every one to come so late to a ball? or wherein lies the peculiar disgrace attached to being among the first arrivals? Our party on entering found the room but thinly sprinkled, and chiefly with people on whom, as they had not the advantage of our acquaintance, we held ourselves privileged to make impertinent remarks.

'What a gown!' said Tom Spencer to his goddess, as he hovered round her like an unquiet spirit, directing her attention to a young lady hardly out of ear-shot.

'Shocking!' replied the fair Julia; 'and how badly her hair is done!'

'*Mais elle n'est pas mal, cette petite,*' said Carambole, who was always pleased; '*quelle fraîcheur, quelle chevelure.*'

'Middling,' responded the dandy to whom he addressed himself, looking at his boots *en profile*; 'but no action.'

In the meantime the plot thickened, and the room gradually filled. Ample mammas fluttered in with their mincing broods; elderly young ladies, whose mouths, as Lavish would have said, don't bear look-

ing into, smiled behind their fans, and seemed as if they wished somebody would ask them to dance; and while the country damsels blushed and giggled, the London girls stood erect and scornful under the conscious advantage of having experienced a season in town. Elderly gentlemen toddled comfortably up to the fire-place, and smiled blandly from behind their white waistcoats. I maintain that nobody enjoys a ball so much as a quiet old gentleman. Young would-be dandies stood in the doorway, and the more aspiring clung tenaciously to their hats; and still fresh arrivals kept pouring in, and quadrilles were being formed down the whole length of the room.

I had already executed sundry duty-dances, thereto strictly enjoined by Sir Peregrine previous to my departure, and was in the midst of what has always been to me a favourite amusement—namely, watching the histrionic powers of my fellow-creatures when on their best behaviour and attired in their company manners—I had even been rewarded by witnessing a beautiful piece of acting on the part of Mrs. Grump, who was addressing ‘dear Angelina’ in an affectionate whisper that would never have led one to suppose she worried the poor girl’s life out at home,—when, far off amongst the crowd, turning away from me, I caught the outline of a graceful head, the droop of a glossy ringlet that could belong to none upon earth but Flora Belmont. My head

swam—I felt almost sick with excitement; but manning myself by a severe effort, I elbowed my way across the room. I found myself face to face with Flora. I know not what I said; I have no recollection of what took place; but a few minutes later found me standing opposite to her in a quadrille, trembling like a girl; but nerving myself to the utmost to master that emotion which I could see was shared to no small extent by my partner. Hardly a word did we exchange—hardly once did our eyes meet during that shortest of quadrilles; yet something told me that silent, distant, as she was, I had not been forgotten. She looked paler and thinner than when I had seen her in London; but hers was a loveliness which neither sorrow nor sickness could destroy—that winning beauty of expression to which regularity of features is only an outward auxiliary, the setting of the opal, the becoming garment of the soul within. Her hand shook as she rested it on my arm at the conclusion of the dance; and with a nervousness equal to her own I hesitatingly proposed to take her to the tea-room. We seated ourselves in an alcove somewhat removed from the rest of the dancers, and in a shaking voice I found courage to ask her where she was staying, and whether Sir Angelo Parsons was one of their party? The look with which she replied served to show me how completely I had been mistaken—how cruelly I had misjudged her. ‘On that hint I spake.’ The tor-

rent that had for months been accumulating at my heart burst its banks at last: I told her of my love, of Cartouch's letter, of my utter misery and despair. I attributed my reckless habits, my deep play, all my misdemeanours, to my hopeless wretchedness when I heard of her rumoured marriage. She in her turn confided to me how heart-broken she had been at the many reports concerning my conduct and character, which Mrs. Man-trap had taken care should reach her ears—how she had disbelieved for a time, till circumstance after circumstance, each corroborating the other, and ending with 'that dreadful duel' with Major Martingale, had forced conviction upon her—how her father had warned her that I was a *roué* and a gambler—and how she was at that moment happier than she had been for months! It would be sacrilege to relate all that took place during that important interview; nor are scenes such as we then enacted for our mutual benefit of much interest, save to the couple immediately concerned. Suffice it to say that words were spoken which the lapse of years might never teach us to forget; feelings given way to which no hope deferred, no coming trials and disappointments should have power to efface.

I put Flora into her carriage with all the tender care, all the conscious ownership of an accepted lover; and as I drove the phaeton home, cheered by Carambole's unceasing melodies, & fresh love-song, rich and

mellow as his native South, for every glimmering milestone that flitted by, accompanied by the prolonged bass of Ramrod's truly British snores, the stars looked down upon a different world from that which had surrounded me a few short hours ago. Hope, more than hope—a feeling of blessed certainty—thrilled through my inmost heart; and though my joy was still and quiet in proportion to its depth—though I was jeered by the merry Frenchman for being, contrary to my custom, silent and *distract*—who shall say that, notwithstanding all their noisy hilarity, I was not in truth far, far the happiest of the home-returning party.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RUN OF THE SEASON.

AMONGST all the heathen gods and goddesses to whom we sacrificed so liberally at Haverley, Morpheus was the only one that could with reason complain of systematic neglect. Diana we worshipped most perseveringly during the day; Bacchus could boast a phalanx of unflinching votaries in the evening, for who might resist Sir Peregrine's dry champagne, or pass untasted by the silky 'twenty-five, with a 'magnum' of which Soames, no unworthy representative of the wine-god, appeared punctually every quarter of an hour? Nor was Venus forgotten; when mirth, music, singing, and *ecarté* in the drawing-room, with an occasional impromptu dance as midnight approached, showed how willingly we yielded ourselves to her rosy fetters. But for the god of sleep, we professed, one and all, but little regard; the only time at which he seemed to vindicate his power being that too-fleeting twenty minutes which elapsed between the summons of one's vigilant domestic, and the painful effort so dreaded by the sluggard, termed 'getting out of bed.'

I could have sworn on the morning after the ball, that my repose had only lasted five minutes—a brilliant five minutes truly, illumined as it was by the image of my affianced Flora, when my uncompromising servant entered the room, under a burden of hot water, clean linen, top-boots and spurs, and snowy appliances thereto belonging, wherein it was my intention to over-ride as much as possible the Hark-Holloa hounds, advertised to 'meet' on that day at Haverley Hall. Oh the delight of that first moment of consciousness, ere I could gather from my scattered faculties *what* it was that made my heart bound so lightly in my bosom!—the first dawning of 'the sober certainty of waking bliss,' worth all the dreams ever yet sent by Proserpine through her 'ivory gate.' Could mortal man be happier than I was on that auspicious morning? Debts, difficulties, and annoyances were all forgotten; if I thought of Zoë, it was but with a twinge of reproach which enhanced the joy succeeding so momentary a pang. Flora was mine! Such a thought alone was sufficient to fill my mental atmosphere with sunshine, nor was it an unpleasing under-current of ideas that I was that day to ride a capital horse, with as crack a pack of hounds as England could produce. The original young thorough-bred one, whose tuition first brought about that interview with old Burgonet which obtained for me a commission in Her Majesty's service, was now an experienced, steady, and very capital hunter—

A matchless steed, though somewhat old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.

And in honour of the friendly old general, denominated 'Sir Benjamin.' Such 'a mount' was in itself an anticipation of success, and who that remembers the ideal laurels which 'going well' through 'a fine run' confers upon the brow of imaginative twenty-one, will refuse to sympathize with my feelings of exhilaration and excitement, as I descended the stairs to partake of that merriest of meals, a hunting-breakfast!

The party were assembled when I entered the dining-room, and my being five minutes later than the rest called down upon me many a jeering reproof for my 'dissipated London habits.' The ladies were all present, having expressed their intention of seeing as much fun as possible from the carriages, under the guidance of Sir Peregrine, who for the first time was unable to join 'the field' on horseback. Julia Batt was very anxious to have ridden, but the Reverend Amos—who despised all sports but shooting, and thought hunting very dangerous—would not hear of such a performance. Had it not been for these parental objections, Tom Spencer would never have seen as well as he did one of the finest runs that ever took place over that country. How the young lady looked in a hat, I am at a loss to say; but judging from what she was in a certain pink bonnet, I should imagine her riding-costume must have made

her fascinating and *piquante* to a degree. Poor Tom Spencer! Sundry neighbours dropped in ere the hounds arrived, to pay their morning salutations to my father, or to talk over the previous evening, and its events past and to come, with that sort of retrospective scandal that makes half the pleasure of a ball in the country. Stained red-coats dotted the steps at the hall-door: and booted gentlemen, whose nerves required a little bracing before encountering our Haverley fences, straggled into the house for a small glass of cherry-brandy, after their gallop to covert. Dragged and panting hacks were being led away, whilst silent sharp-looking grooms were using their own pocket-handkerchiefs to remove every speck or stain that might mar the glossy coats of those powerful high-bred hunters they had brought so carefully to the place of meeting.

‘Here they come!—here they come! oh, how pretty,’ exclaim the ladies; and ‘Oh, you darlings!’ chimes in the enthusiastic Miss Batt, as the clean and various-coloured pack are seen trotting on to the lawn; where, grouping themselves round their huntsman, they take up a highly picturesque position in front of the house. No *provincial* establishment is that of the Hark-Holloa hounds. In all its various gradations, from the noble master down to the feeder’s assistant, ‘pace’ is indelibly stamped upon every individual, every article connected with the kennels.

Joy, the huntsman, a snake-headed, wiry, active man, devoted to his profession, and a first-rate horseman, looked as game and undeniable as the two thorough-bred ones provided to carry him through the day. Quickness of thought and action, energy of mind and body were impersonated in Will Partridge, his first whip, a man whom nature must have framed for the express office he filled so well. No anatomist could venture to doubt that those limbs were made on purpose for the boots and breeches which fitted them so wonderfully; and the general opinion amongst ourselves was that Will must have been born in these sporting appliances. Nimrod was doubtless an adept in all the practices of the chase; but I question if Nimrod, though mounted on Pegasus, the greatest flyer on record—ay, even had Mercury lent him the use of his heels, could have slipped away to the 'down-wind' end of a woodland, and when there bored through the blackest and bitterest thorn-fence that ever staked a hunter, with half the ease or half the rapidity of Tom Prince—whose duty it was, as second whip, to enforce upon the younger members of the pack the propriety of their 'harking forward' and 'getting together,' and the necessity of abstaining entirely from 'hare.'

Woe to the riotous puppy that should indiscreetly proclaim his discovery of the forbidden fruit. Tom's thong was indeed 'swift to smite, and never to spare;' and it was quite unnecessary to request that func-

tionary to 'ride at him and cut him in two,' so rapidly did summary punishment follow the eager culprit's offence. The hounds themselves were level in size, and faultless in frame and symmetry; their condition was perfect, as was shown by their quick earnest movements and the bloom upon their skins; some of the old school might have thought them a little too light, but even such critical veterans must have confessed that they looked 'all over like going.' The horses were well-bred, powerful animals, unusually sound, and with action that promised jumping capabilities to take them over that strongly-enclosed country. All the minor appliances were in keeping with the more important items of the establishment; and though last, not least, the noble master himself, a perfect specimen of his class, the high-bred English gentleman, was every inch a sportsman. Look at him now, as he comes galloping up, a little late; for a seat in Parliament entails its duties as well as its advantages, and letters must be answered, even though a field of eager horsemen may be kept waiting by the delay. Look at him now, with his manly open bearing, his fine athletic form, the flush of health upon his cheek, and the sparkle of pleasure in his eye, as with frank courtesy and hearty good-humour he exchanges greetings with one and all, from the stately peer to the burly yeoman, ere he rides into the middle of the pack, who with awning countenances and waving sterns welcome

that well-known voice, and say if Lord Rasperdale is not the *beau ideal* of what a master of hounds should be. Joy touches his cap, glad to see him at last, for now we shall begin. My lord exchanges his hack for his hunter—a powerful, thorough-bred chestnut, that it is not every man who could ride, but who when handled by a workman can show ‘how fields are *crossed*.’ At that signal, there is a general move, and in the midst of fidgetting horses, mutual greetings, and much cigar smoke, the hounds trot away to draw Haverley Gorse.

‘How are you, Digby, my boy?’ bursts on my ear in well-remembered tones; and turning sharply round, I recognised my old friend Cartouch—the last person I expected to see at that particular moment. Hearty was our mutual greeting, and many were the inquiries as to our doings—past, present, and to come. Cartouch was fond of hunting as ever, and having got together a capital stud, was now commencing the season with all the ardour and enthusiasm of a boy. Save a few additional crow’s-feet, and an occasional line of silver in the glossy black hair, the colonel looked as young as ever; and although he could not then have been very far from the half century, his fine figure, graceful seat, and daring horsemanship, would have led a stranger to suppose he was still considerably on the sunny side of middle age—whenever that very conventional period may be supposed to begin.

‘There’s a fox in that gorse, I’ll take my oath,’ suddenly exclaimed he, in the midst of a long Canadian conversation, in which we had got interested: ‘look at those hounds, how keen they are,’ he added, as one after another, emerging from a large long strip of open wood, which they had been unsuccessfully drawing, rushed, with ears erect and rising bristles, towards the prickly covert. ‘Sir Benjamin’ seemed to partake of their excitement, for he fidgetted about, snatched impatiently at his bridle, and trembled under me almost as much as the evergreen branches which were shaking above the backs of the busy hounds. ‘Always a fox at Haverley,’ said Lord Rasperdale, as he galloped by to call some foot-people off from a highly-commanding position they had taken up, exactly against the spot at which the wily animal was likely to go away. Even while he spoke, a clear sonorous holloa rang through the air, and though I crammed the spurs into ‘Sir Benjamin,’ and rattled him down the middle ride of the covert at a pace which would have made some race-horses look foolish, I only reached the other end in time to see the hounds pouring like a cataract over a high staken-bound fence, which crested the opposite eminence, accompanied by the faint and unnecessary ‘too-too’ with which Joy indulged himself on his horn, and the flutter of ‘my lord’s’ coat-tails, as he disappeared on the further side of the fence. ‘Now for it,’ I thought—‘there will be a rare scent over

Haverley pastures, and he *must* cross the vale after that; by Jove, we are in for a tickler!' as I caught fast hold of 'Sir Benjamin's' head, and sinking the wind a little, to make up for the badness of my start, put an awkward 'hog-backed' stile and a fairish ox-fence between myself and the crowd, who as usual rushed violently into the gate-ways, where they herded in inextricable confusion. My manœuvre answered admirably, for ere another field was crossed, the hounds, turning at right angles down the fence, enabled me to get alongside of them, and short as was the distance we had yet come, the pace at which they were going gave me ample room to look about me. They were streaming like a meteor, and running perfectly mute, so that after the row and turmoil created by the trampling crowd from which I had just escaped, all seemed silent as the grave. On the right was Joy, still horn in hand, skimming the large fences like a swallow on the wing, whilst, stride for stride, and leap for leap, Cartouch was riding by his side, sitting down in his saddle, and handling the powerful bay horse under him in the most masterly manner. On the left, and a little in advance of these, was Lord Rasperdale, going straight as a line, in his own quiet, determined way, swerving neither to right nor left, for gate or gap, but taking everything as it came, and, to use a forcible expression, apparently 'glued to the hounds.' A loud crack from a broken rail made me look

behind, to see Tom Spencer just *save* a fall, as he landed in the field. He told me afterwards that he was in such a hurry he did not like to 'shut off the steam,' as he called it, by collecting his horse for the effort, and the pace carried him through four strong bars as if they had been paper. A momentary 'hover,' which one could hardly call a check, and another turn to the left showed me some ten or twelve more men, in red, black, and green, who although not quite so forward as ourselves were still going gallantly with the hounds, whilst a loose grey horse, with streaming rein and flapping stirrup-leathers, who seemed determined to see as much of the fun as he could, now that he had got rid of his encumbrance, completed the picture of which I obtained a momentary glimpse. It was but for a moment, as I had soon enough to do again, to keep my own place. Although my horse was fast as the wind, could get over anything a quadruped might jump, and in condition was fit to run for the Derby, yet, with all these advantages, and no great weight upon his back, the deep ridge and furrow, the wet holding soil of Haverley pastures, large enclosures of from 50 to 100 acres, together with thick black-thorn fences, sometimes adorned with two ditches, and occasionally fortified by a strong oak rail, gave him, clipper as he was, quite enough to do at the extra pace created by that good scenting ground. I fancy none of us regretted the delay, when a ploughed field,

just in front of Waterley Ash-bank, brought hounds and horses to a check, and afforded a little breathing time, sadly required by the latter.

‘What a capital thing,’ said Cartouch;—‘such a country.’

‘The fastest fifteen minutes I ever saw in my life,’ remarked Lord Rasperdale, pulling out his watch: to which Tom Spencer added, as he jumped off for one moment to relieve his panting steed, ‘We have not done yet; I’ll bet my future bishoprick he’s over the vale, and we shall have ‘the Squelch’ to negotiate, twenty feet of water and rotten banks!’

Sure enough Joy hit off his fox, in his own masterly manner, at the further end of the Ash-bank, and we were soon cantering down the hill, at a somewhat reduced rate and over an easier country. The hounds, who had proved to us the pace at which they could *run*, now showing to admiration the closeness with which they could *hunt*; whilst far in the distance, amidst the vivid green of the fertile water-meadows, a line of willows disclosed the winding course of the remorseless Squelch. Deep, silent, and sluggish as the waters of Lethe is that forbidding stream. Many a gallant hunter has cooled his reeking sides in its broad wave, and, extricated with difficulty by a team of his fellow-creatures and a stout cart-rope, has acquired a high-bred disgust at the pure element, and never cleared a brook again. Many an aspiring youth, whose vaulting ambition

would acknowledge neither difficulty nor danger, has here baptized the unpaid-for coat, and drenched to wretchedness the vainglorious leathers ; while many a cautious veteran writhes under a twinge of sympathetic lumbago as he recalls his ill-advised attempt to ford the treacherous Squelch. Bridles, stirrup-irons, spurs, whips, and cigar-cases,—how many treasures lurk concealed in those waters of oblivion ; and who can tell over how many more they may close for ever, ere that gloomy day, long, long may it be deferred, when the last who-whoop shall sound over the decline of fox-hunting, and merry England—merry then no more—shall see her sole remaining pack of hounds vanish before the uncompromising approach of an iron age. In the meantime, the pace is improving : we are all once more in our swing ; the old grass on which we have again got is sound and springy ; and the horses, as may be supposed, completely sobered. There are ten men with the hounds, and of these three are showing unmistakable symptoms of having had ‘enough.’ Cartouch has got a dirty coat, although he is unwilling to confess the fall, which no one seems to have witnessed. Lord Rasperdale is still slightly in advance of us ; and Sir Benjamin is striding away under me, as only thorough-bred horses can go, when subjected to severe and sustained exertion. Joy is sailing along, never taking his eye off his hounds, and leaving everything but the choice of pace to his horse, who repays such unlimited confi-

dence by doing his best. The scent is so good that a huntsman has to interfere but little, and ours has given us a specimen of his skill at Ash-bank, which proved him an adept in his craft. Thus it was that, notwithstanding all the instinctive cunning of his kind, we were still upon such good terms with our fox as promised to place him in hand ere he could reach the distant forest, now scarce visible in the far horizon. Just one field short of Waterley Ash-bank, —a straggling open strip of plantation, that seemed to be annually subjected to the axe—the hounds, with a dash and gallantry inseparable from a really good pack, had so far overrun the scent, that when, with their huntsman's assistance they again took it up, it was in a direction inclining towards the line they had already come. With the rapidity of lightning, it seemed to flash across Joy's mind that they were running what is termed 'heel;' that is to say, although actually upon the track of the animal they pursued, in the reverse direction to that in which he was really travelling, and consequently at a disadvantage increasing with every yard. Two blasts of his horn, two cheers with his mellow voice, brought the well-disciplined and sagacious body about his horse's heels, and galloping off in an exactly contrary direction, towards the farther corner of the sheltering ash-bank, he drew his hounds quietly across the line, and taking it up this time the right way, they stooped one and all to the scent, congratu-

lating each other with a merry peal on having lost so little time or distance by the adroit double of their wary victim. On they went, downwards into the vale, and along the level meadows, with an increasing speed that sorely taxed the powers and, above all, the training of our steeds. And now there is a holloa from a labourer far across the brook which we are so rapidly approaching, and Cartouch, whose eye rivals a hawk's in keenness, declares he sees our fox travelling steadily across yon large grass field, nearly half a mile ahead of us. I take a strong pull at Sir Benjamin, reducing him to a moderate canter, for the hounds unhesitatingly stream down towards the brook, and it is evident that, as Tom Spencer predicted, we must charge the Squelch. For an instant they disappear, as though the earth had swallowed them, and the next moment straining up the opposite bank, they shake the wet from their draggled coats, and throw their tongues in joyous concert, as they sweep on again. Cartouch and Joy are racing for the spot where they crossed, always, in the absence of other landmarks, to be presumed the narrowest place in a brook: and I hear the ring of their stirrup-irons as they fly over it together and abreast. On their left Lord Rasperdale charges it at a fearful place, thereby gaining a slight turn upon the hounds, and clearing it with a tremendous effort, rolls, man and horse, into the field, but on the *right side*, and without loss of time is in the saddle and

away again. I glance my eye rapidly along the banks to select my place, as I dare not pull 'Sir Benjamin' out of his stride to follow any of the others, and spying a sound looking take-off under a tree, steer the thorough-bred one towards that uncertain spot. No need to quicken the old horse's pace as he nears the difficulty. Many a brook has he got over gallantly, and never yet has he been in; so as the surface gleaming in a momentary sunbeam catches his eye, he cocks his small ears, and pulling savagely at his bridle, rushes like a colt unbroken towards the cavity, and lands gloriously on the further side, the waters glancing beneath me like a cataract, and a large piece of the bank cut away by his hind legs subsiding dully into the stream. It was touch and go, but he recovered himself at the moment I thought we must both have gone backwards, and with a snort of triumph, laid him down again to his work, whilst I said to myself for the twentieth time, 'Can anything be so like flying as riding a free-goer over a wide place?' All our friends, however, were not so fortunate. Six or seven more gallant hearts charged it unflinchingly—two of them on horses so beat that they had no strength to jump or to refuse, and over head they went, without an effort to save themselves. Two got safely over by dint of great good luck and a pitiless application of the spurs; and another, to the best of my belief, is there still. The Squelch was no

child's play after thirty minutes from Haverley Gorse, and out of a large field, those alone whom I have mentioned had the hardihood to attempt it. The rest never saw a yard of the run, and 'hold their manhoods cheap,' when this famous day is mentioned, a day never to be forgotten in the annals of the Hark-Holloa hounds. Ten minutes more have elapsed, and what a change has come over the scene. The forest is no longer far off, and we are getting into a wilder and less cultivated country, which, slightly on the ascent, becomes less and less favourable to our horses. The hounds are still streaming away, now two fields ahead of us, and Joy's efforts to get closer produce little result, save a corresponding whisk of his horse's tail. Lord Rasperdale's chestnut, notwithstanding two falls, is still pretty fresh, while the care and judgment with which Car-touch is riding promises to enable him to last some time longer. The ground is deep, the fences wide, tangled, and straggling; patches of rushes stud the ill-drained fields, and here and there a stunted thorn or blighted fir-tree affords a perch to a solitary carrion crow or jerking magpie. The forest is looming in our front, a long black belt of interminable wood, and for the forest we are pointing straight as line could be drawn. 'Sir Benjamin' is still pulling, and I willingly deceive myself into the belief that he is yet quite fresh. Now for it! This is the time to shake to the front, and cut down three of the best

riders England can produce. I urge my horse forward, and for five delicious minutes I am alone with the hounds! Tom Spencer trying hard to overhaul me, the more experienced hands, Cartouch, Rasperdale, and Joy, economizing their speed, a field behind me, with Tom working away a little in their front; one more man, a parson, three fields further off, and not another soul to be seen anywhere. The hounds still running as if nothing would ever stop them. This was indeed a triumph; and notwithstanding 'Sir Benjamin's' pitching on his head over a very moderate fence, and getting up again in a sadly incoherent manner, I would take no warning, and crossed the succeeding enclosure, a black, deep, boggy sort of field, with unreduced haste. That finished him. The fence at the further end was thick and strong, the ditch towards me deep, though narrow, and when I felt the old horse, usually so eager and elastic, make his effort as though he cared but little what became of him, I knew how the event must be. We hung for a few seconds entangled in the strong unyielding black-thorn, struggled in vain with the slippery perpendicular bank, and as the rider glided off over the shoulder, his horse subsided into the ditch upon his back, from whence his four iron-shod feet protruded pitifully towards the heavens, in an attitude of helpless supplication.

'Cast, I see,' said Lord Rasperdale, as he went by me; 'he'll struggle out when he gets his wind.'

‘Can I help you, Digby?’ good-naturedly asked Cartouch at the same moment, on my other side; not that he waited for an answer.

Joy, of course, was too intent upon his hounds to take any notice of aught else under the skies; and although Tom Spencer and the clergyman, whose horses were both ‘done to a turn,’ would have stopped to render me any assistance in their power, I waved them on again towards the line of the fast fading chace. Eight-and-forty minutes by my watch from the find, and see, the hounds are doubling down yon old hedge-row, two fields from the forest. ‘He is running short for his life; he must be dead beat. I shall see them kill him?’ I stood on the fatal bank with straining eyes, and viewed the hazy forms of the hounds fleeting down one hedge-row and up another; whilst Joy, here urging his unwilling steed at a style, there blundering him through a gap, strove in vain to reach his darlings, and share with them their well-earned triumph. See! he is off his horse and amongst them; Rasperdale and Cartouch have sprung from their saddles, and the sighing November breeze wafts a faint who-whoop to my expectant ear. At the same instant, ‘Sir Benjamin,’ awaking from his stupor, extricates himself from his awkward position by a tremendous effort, and a series of those laughable gymnastics with which a horse usually emerges from a scrape, and gives himself a hearty shake, as if to ascertain his own identity, a

fact of which, judging by his scared eye and distended nostril, he seems by no means sure. Mounting him and jogging quietly on, three or four friendly hand-gates bring me up in time to be one of the triumphant six who see this gallant fox broken up after a run of fifty-five minutes, unprecedented for pace and straightness, nearly eleven miles from point to point, over the finest country in England, and with but one trifling check, if check it might be called, from find to finish ! * * * *

CHAPTER XII.

FATHERS AND SONS.

TO an unprejudiced observer, few performances would probably appear so thoroughly uncomfortable as that of a long and weary ride, through lanes and bye-ways, knee-deep in mud, upon a tired horse, with the small rain that so often accompanies the close of a short November day, drizzling in one's face, and the prospect of the already dubious twilight becoming pitch dark, hours before it can be possible to reach one's home. The hunter, conscious of having done his duty, and knowing by experience how often the length of his homeward journey is most unfairly proportioned to the severity of his previous exertions, jogs on in a deliberate sort of compromise between trotting and walking, relapsing completely into the latter pace whenever a slight ascent or inequality of ground affords an excuse for the delay, and varying the monotony of such a method of travelling by an occasional alarming demonstration of throwing himself into the middle of the road upon his head, a threat that, for the honour of the noble animal, I am bound to confess, I have never yet

known fulfilled. After such a day as that which witnessed our run from Haverley Gorse, ever afterwards known as 'the Great Haverley Run,' it may be supposed that Tom Spencer and I enjoyed to perfection all the comforts I have mentioned in our homeward ride, but far were we from being discontented with our lot; I question if, in the whole habitable globe there existed, on that eventful afternoon, any two individuals so thoroughly satisfied with themselves as myself and my companion. After exchanging congratulations with Cartouch, Lord Rasperdale, and Joy, after a brief and glowing account of the run, intermixed with much personal anecdote, to the first detachment of unfortunates that came up when we had killed our fox, and who were commanded by Will Partridge, that worthy having held himself ready at any time to struggle to the front and render his professional assistance, if required; after a cordial farewell to our companions in glory, whose road lay differently from our own, Tom and I wended our way homewards in a frame of mind amiable and enviable beyond measure. How we praised each other's horses and each other's riding, a somewhat reflective flattery, as we had been together most of the day, and the compliments paid by the one to the prowess of the other were but an additional tribute of admiration to his own success. Nor were our absent friends forgotten. Rasperdale and Cartouch were voted the two finest riders and

best fellows in England; Joy the most talented huntsman in the world; the Hark-Holloa hounds unequalled by any earthly establishment, and their country a perfect paradise to live in and ride over. Tom Spencer began to have great doubts about going into the church, as it was rapidly dawning upon him that he could not exist without hunting *at least* five days in the week; whilst I completely made up my own mind to give up soldiering altogether, sell out, marry, and devote myself entirely to the worship of Diana. Alas! that the tripartite goddess should combine in two of her characters such antagonistic attributes, and that the exigencies of the fertile Lucina should be so inimical to the pursuits of the vigorous virgin of the woods. But such calculations enter not the teeming brain of twenty-one; and we plodded home in perfect contentment with ourselves, our horses, and our day's amusement. Every turn in the road brought us in contact with some less successful horseman, for whom the oft-told tale, though planting thorns of discontent and disgust in the breast of the auditor, thrilled with untarnished freshness from the lips of the historian. Here we were overtaken by one gentleman 'who had seen everything we did—was never more than a field behind us; and if hounds had only run *straight* could have been with us at any time.' And a little farther on we met an honest and more disconsolate sportsman, who confessed to having lost us alto-

gether, and added, with desponding energy, that it was 'just his luck.'

Various and amusing were the excuses for their non-appearance, and far-fetched and ingenious the reasons insisted upon, to prove that there was no lack of courage or determination to be laid to the charge of the unwilling absentees. If Major Slasher had not been riding a young one (now in his third season) he could have had a capital start (the Major argued *ab initio*); and when that is the case, no man alive, so he thinks, can beat that gallant officer. Varnish, the dealer, 'had been going in front for the first half hour,' and appealed to 'Squire Softly, who had unfortunately gone home, to corroborate the fact.

'Just as I came to the bruk, Captain, with little Golightly pulling 'oudacious,' for, as *you* know (!) he's a devil at water, my old snaffle-bridle broke short off at the mouth-piece; and I went four times round that identical field before I could stop him. He's a rare little horse, Captain—how he'd fly with your weight! look at him now, how fresh he is.'

And on casting my eye over the exhausted steed alluded to, sure enough the bridle had come in two near the bit, and the broken pieces, looking very much as if they had been severed with a pen-knife, were fastened together with a bit of string. Mr. Crane had been deceived by a boy scaring crows, and rode to the urchin, under the impression it was a veritable 'holloa.' Whilst young Mylde, who was

notorious for 'pottering in the gaps,' had ridden his own line gallantly at starting through a 'hand-gate;' but being unsuccessful in his search for an easy exit from the field he had so incautiously entered, was forced, after making a complete circuit, again to emerge through that inglorious portal. Lord Lately had been floored by a collision in mid-air with Farmer Bull—the peer getting considerably the worst of it. Sir Francis Fakeaway had stopped his horse (since dead) in the first twenty minutes; and young Fearless, after riding over two fallen sportsmen and three gates, had finally deposited his father's favourite hunter in the yielding mire of the bottomless Squelch. George Jealous, old Venom, and Captain Snarl, would not allow that the hounds ever went any *pace at any time*, but that *when they did*, there was nobody with them!—and listened to our unwelcome raptures with a sneer of incredulous disgust. Poor Carambole was the only one who had the manliness to confess his misfortunes, without any attempt at concealment or palliation, and him we overtook vainly endeavouring, by the light of his cigar, to decipher some mysterious hieroglyphics on a time-worn sign-post, not too distinct at any period, and perfectly illegible in the dusk of a November evening. The active Frenchman had raised himself by his arms to a level with the important inscription, and when we discovered him was perched in mid-air, puffing forth volumes of smoke, and blowing up a tremendous light from a huge

Havanna, wherewith to improve that topographical knowledge on which his dinner so entirely depended.

‘Holloa! Carambole, have you lost your way?’ and ‘What have you done with your horse?’ were our simultaneous inquiries.

‘He very good horse,’ was the reply, ‘but I shall nevere see him again. *Il m’a joué un joli tour*—I gallopp, I jomp. *Nous arrivons ensemble à un—* ‘stake-him-bound’—you call him ‘ox-fence.’ *J’en-fonce mon chapeau sur ma tête, je me suis mis la cravache à la main; je lui dis, montez, donc, maudite bête! il a grimpé là-dessus. C’a ne va pas mal.* I lance his side, I come to thicker ‘stake-him-bound.’ I tomble in. He gallopp away, and shake his tail. *Je dis, ‘Bon jour, mon ami; je ne te reverrais jamais. Fortune de la gue-r-r-e; il faut marcher par exemple! mais on n’est pas défendu de fumer.’*

And the voluble philosopher strode on by our side in perfect contentment and good humour, not diminished by the welcome information that three more miles would put a period to his labours, and that, in all probability, the missing hunter would be home before him. On cross-examination and inquiry, it appeared that Carambole, though perfectly unused to the sport, and, like most foreigners, more at home in the *manège* than the field, had gone in the front rank up to our first check, riding over timber, and charging his ‘stake-him-bounds,’ as he called them, with all the gallantry of his nation. The horse on

which Sir Peregrine had mounted him—an old and excellent hunter—acquitted himself to admiration, although, doubtless, somewhat surprised at the inconsiderate recklessness with which he found himself ridden; and Carambole was in the height of his triumph when a double ditch, or some such unforeseen obstacle, caused the active and well-trained animal to make a second spring when in the air, totally unexpected by his rider, and which had the effect of precipitating him into the adjoining field upon his back, whilst the horse, released from his burden, galloped on for several miles with the hounds, till, finding the pace more severe than was consistent with his ideas of amusement, he turned his head in the direction of Haverley, and trotted quietly home to his own stable, where, on our arrival at the Hall, we found him comfortably established—all anxiety on his account having been transferred to the fate of the Marquis. Unpromising as was Carambole's *début* in the hunting-field, he took back with him to France a passion for the chase which all the difficulties he has to contend with, all the annoyances to which he must be subjected in that unsportsmanlike country, seem unable to eradicate.

Ah well! hunting is good fun, and so is moistening the recapitulation of your morning's exploits with bumpers of Bordeaux; nor did we spare the latter seductive fluid in the evening, after devoting the day so successfully to the former pursuit. But the reali-

ties of life entail sterner and more disagreeable duties than riding over a grass country and drinking claret in an arm-chair ; and the more I reflected on my present position—the more I considered my existing relations with Flora Belmont, the more I felt that it was only due to her that I should, as speedily as possible, come to some understanding with Sir Peregrine previous to making my proposal in form to her father. I was well aware that there would be many difficulties in our way—that the old Colonel's bad opinion of my principles and conduct would prove a serious obstacle to our union ; that ' money,' ever the first consideration in this business-like world, would be wanting on both sides, and I shuddered to think of my debts, and the large sums that I had squandered upon trifles, and worse than trifles. Young as I was, the veil was gradually falling from my eyes ; and the career that had once seemed so jovial, careless, and high-spirited, now that I fondly hoped I had some one to think of besides myself—some one to depend entirely upon me for guidance and support—appeared selfish and contemptible in the extreme. Bitterly did I deplore my past follies, and the unworthiness of such a character as mine to mate with my gentle Flora. In shame and sorrow I recalled my feigned adoration of Mrs. Man-trap, and my heart died within me to think that Fate might have in store for me—alas ! but too just a reprisal !—such a disappointment as I

had inflicted upon the high-minded Zoë. But, above all, I chafed and fretted to reflect that the filthy lucre which I had heretofore despised—the dross that I had hitherto considered but as a necessary inconvenience attendant upon civilization — might now prove ‘the one thing needful,’ the only insuperable obstacle to the triumph of my better feelings—to my entrance upon a nobler and purer state of being.

Stung by such thoughts as these, I placed as high a value upon gold as I had previously depreciated that very necessary commodity; and ever in extremes, thought myself capable of any exertion to attain that which I had often squandered so profusely. There is less difference than the world is apt to imagine between the spendthrift and the miser; the same selfish temperament that makes the youth greedy of pleasure and ungrudging of aught save his own enjoyment, produces in after years an insatiable desire for the means by which such indulgences may be procured, and as the owner of ‘the splendid shilling,’ whilst the coin is his, possesses everything that a shilling can purchase, so the hoarding capitalist, though he may deny himself all the luxuries and most of the necessaries of life, has the satisfaction of feeling that he can at any time command all that his fellow-creatures are striving so unceasingly to obtain. Thus it is that the same individual who at twenty risks hundreds on the turn of a die and thousands on the speed of a horse, nor suffers such excitement to impair his appetite or disturb his repose,

shall at forty, with ten times the knowledge and twenty times the means, grudge to spend a penny upon the most simple and economical of amusements; and whilst acres are fertilizing to increase his rents, and consols accumulating to swell his ever-growing capital, shall remain, in the midst of all his wealth, continually haunted 'by the ghost of a shilling.'

Nevertheless an explanation must be come to, and an interview with Sir Peregrine, always rather a formidable undertaking, must be arranged for the purpose. Divers ceremonies required to be gone through on these occasions. In the first place a footman was despatched for Soames, who was charged with a *viva voce* appeal to his master for the honour of an interview, which invariably called forth the same reply, delivered with becoming pomposity by the messenger. 'Sir Peregrine will see you, Sir, directly he is at leisure.' I was always at a loss to know the line which my father drew between his hours of what he called his leisure and his employment, for to business he had an unconquerable aversion, and he seldom or never looked into a book. An hour or so of waiting then produced Mr. Soames once more, who, throwing the door wide open as though to announce a duchess, would inform me, as if I was an utter stranger, that 'Sir Peregrine would see me if I would *step this way*,'—and *this way* I accordingly stepped, with a beating heart and much misgiving mind.

'Soames has informed me you wish to speak with

me, Digby,' was the unpromising commencement; 'may I ask the cause of your demanding such an interview? I have five minutes to spare, and must beg of you to come at once to the point.'

This was not a reassuring mode of entering upon what I felt would be a delicate business, but, determined not to be staggered, I at once laid the case in a very few words before my father, stating openly my own engagement to Miss Belmont, and concluding with the somewhat startling demand to know what he would make up his mind to do in a pecuniary point of view, to support 'the position' (this I thought a hit) of the heir to his name? Never shall I forget the pause of astonishment with which my father, pushing his spectacles up on his brow, gazed at me whilst I delivered my peroration; and willingly do I draw a veil over the scene that followed, in which retort and recrimination, ill-judged censure on the one side and unpardonable irreverence on the other, created a breach never afterwards to be repaired between those whose interests, even in a worldly point of view, should have been in common, whose reciprocal attachment nothing on earth should have been able to undermine. Amidst the whirlwind of censure with which Sir Peregrine attacked my habits, my pursuits, and even my character, I discovered that the real offence was my having dared to cast my eyes upon a penniless young lady, and that in his sanguine and ambitious mind the old man had always looked to my future marriage with some

wealthy heiress to re-establish the prosperity of our house, and was living on from year to year, sinking deeper into his difficulties and becoming more hopelessly involved in his affairs, cheered by this vague hope which I had now dashed to the ground. In my indignation and despair I lost all self-command; and to my shame be it said, forgot that reverence which under all circumstances is ever due from a son to his father. I vowed that I was utterly reckless of what should happen to me if this marriage was not to come off; that I would return to my dissolute courses and extravagant career. I scouted our dignities, and scoffed at 'our position.' I blasphemed the memory of Sir Hugo, and swore that I cared not what became of Haverley; that the estates might go to the Jews and the family to the devil! and, in short, our interview concluded with so little prospect of reconciliation after all that had taken place, that the next morning saw me posting back to rejoin my regiment in London, having quarrelled irretrievably with my father, vowing vengeance against Haverley and all belonging to it, and utterly regardless as to where I should go or what should become of me—a dangerous state of mind for a young man just turned one-and-twenty hurrying back to the seductive arms of the modern Babylon.

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